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NOTES TO CONTRIBUTORS

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Editor's Notes

There can scarcely be any Government in the world today which has not been alerted by the scale and scope of recent natural and man-made disasters, to the urgent need for national preparedness. But need is rarely matched by action and, besides, with limited resources the poor countries of the Third World are ill equipped to prepare themselves for the consequences of a major calamity. We therefore make no excuse for publishing in this Number a further and major article on this subject. Col Ritchie, its author, focusing on developing countries, advocates disaster-preparedness planning which he sees linked with and complementary to national planning for economic and social development. He suggests how such pre-disaster planning should be undertaken nationally and regionally, and how specialist training in this field should be arranged and the citizenry educated to be disaster-conscious.

Vital to any public business, and particularly so when disasters are faced, is a competent, trained administration. Professor Green, writing on Nigeria, believes that a new-style professionalised public service is essential to this end. He would accord the generalist short shrift and while his cogent argument may not be acceptable to all Government managers, those who are against now need to marshal their case.

We welcome the opportunity in this issue to publish our first-ever article on the Chinese method of administration. Diana Conyers provides a balanced, sympathetic and largely factual picture of the self-reliant Chinese system of Government. It may help readers to take in this picture if we add here that Chairman Mao built a modern 'revolutionary' society very firmly on traditional organisation and skills – that is the view of at least one other observer who has suggested that 'the most important feature of, and lesson from, China is the way the past has been involved in the establishment of the self-confidence of the present'.

Finally in this Number Dr Onibokun assesses an experiment in low cost housing carried out in Western Nigeria. While the lesson seems to be that small good-quality housing can be built, making optimum use of local materials, at a cost far below similar conventional contractor-built homes, nonetheless they remain far beyond the means of the really poor. But the Nigerian experiment does show how construction costs can be brought within the reach of modest-income families.

Disaster Preparedness

G. N. RITCHIE*

AN EXAMINATION OF THE FUNCTION AND NATURE OF THE PRE-DISASTER PLANNING AND ARRANGEMENTS, WHICH CAN ENSURE SPEEDY AND COST-EFFECTIVE RELIEF IN DISASTER

Guidelines for action in most activities are evolved from study and experience. To some degree this is true of Disaster Preparedness and Disaster Relief Management, although currently the great weight of work and study in the field relates to scientific research into prediction and prevention of disaster caused by natural phenomena such as earthquakes and hurricanes. Success in prediction gives the greatest cause for hope, but is dependent upon heavy investment in human and technological resources. China has made this commitment in relationship to earthquake prediction but even then, as recent events have shown, certainty is not assured. Radar and Satellite surveillance helps identify the formation of tropical storms at sea, but their subsequent erratic movements makes accurate forecasting of threatened areas difficult, and prevention of the damage they cause is dependent upon the willingness and ability of people to act. Actual prevention of natural catastrophe remains but a hope. We are faced therefore with a continuing occurrence of disaster which must affect large numbers of the world's poorest people for many years to come.

Disaster situations calling for international relief action occur with apparent increasing frequency, particularly in poorer and developing countries. Although improved communications throughout the world and more readily available news through television are doubtless amongst the reasons for the public's greater awareness, statistical analysis at the University of Bradford[1] indicates an actual increase in the occurrence of disaster both in scale and in the numbers of people affected. People are the essential factor however because unless people are involved

*Lt Col Ritchie, R. E., Hon Fellow, University of Manchester, is working in the Department of Administrative Studies on a research project concerning the maintenance of life support systems and their associated requirements for communications and transport in disaster situations in developing countries.

[1] 'Towards an Explanation and Reduction of Disaster Proneness'. Baird *et al*, August, 1975. Disaster Research Unit, University of Bradford, Yorkshire, England.

we have no disaster, merely the occurrence of natural phenomena and perhaps material loss.

Research within the Department of Administrative Studies for Overseas Visiting Fellows of the University of Manchester, focuses on disaster in the developing countries, and has examined the maintenance of life support systems, namely, water, food, medical aid and shelter, and the communication and transportation systems associated with these. It is in this area that we find the pattern in disaster. A pattern difficult to establish if we try to find it in the occurrence or effect of the natural phenomena. By examining what evidence there is of the pattern of action in disaster relief operations, we can see that although the natural phenomena causes havoc, destruction and death, the resultant distress affecting the survivors is, at least in part, caused by the Administration's difficulty in maintaining the life support systems. Analysis of these administrative failures shows that, in many instances, actions and contingency plans, which are described as Disaster Preparedness in this article, could have resulted from pre-disaster planning and would have helped the Administration to cope in this period of crisis to provide quicker and more cost-effective relief. To a large degree this would have come from planned employment and deployment of local resources.

In his excellent study of 'Drought-Relief Operations in an Indian State' published in the October 1975 edition of this Journal, Dr Bhattacharya illustrates how realisation of this point has been aiding both victim and administrator in India.

In most cases the techniques of management are of greater importance than the technology which they have available to provide relief.

The Role of Government in Disaster

Management of a disaster situation, whether this results from a catastrophic earthquake or an erosive drought and famine, is a natural extension of an Administration's responsibility for the maintenance of order and the provision of life support requirements. Unusual pressures for action will develop at these times however and difficulties in effecting action will be present. But, if no contingency plans exist and no precautionary action has been taken, the pressures on government and the difficulties in taking action to bring relief will be greatly magnified.

One must of course acknowledge the problems attendant upon initiation of programmes of pre-disaster planning and preparedness. Amongst these: inertia resulting from a lack of knowledge of the possibilities for disaster preparedness; fears of the financial commitments involved, based upon realisation of the huge, but unrelated, costs of disaster relief; cultural attitudes relating to 'Acts of God'. All of these are very real problems. There are also, no doubt, fears that an ability to help oneself may affect the availability of outside aid. India and China amongst the developing countries have probably perfected to the greatest degree the ability to employ, deploy and rely upon their own resources. There is no indication that relief donors are less likely to help those who endeavour to help themselves, in fact the evidence indicates that the converse is true.

Disaster Preparedness is not the expensive operation of creating stockpiles of food and supplies and providing expensive specialist equipment but rather it is a sensible analysis of possible situations with a view to determining how authority and responsibility for action should be delegated, what local human and material resources exist and how these can be earmarked and deployed. This precautionary planning should be complemented by a programme of public education and training, so that all elements of the population understand what is being done, what they must do, and how to do it.

The role of Government must be to initiate this programme of Disaster Preparedness and the Administration then becomes responsible for implementing it and maintaining its effectiveness.

What is required

To help define the guidelines for future action and to establish the principles upon which planning should be based, we need to know much more of what has happened in disaster occurrences in the past. For example, much more research is needed into what happens in disaster situations in relation to:

a the flow of information which provides the basis for all decisions and consequent action;

b the needs, attitudes and reactions of people in disaster situations, people who are often of different cultural backgrounds and much less sophisticated than those involved in providing relief;

c the availability of resources within and close to the disaster area.

Although significant work has been done in the United States concerning the reaction and attitudes of individuals and communities in disaster there, it is doubtful how relevant this is to disaster situations in developing countries. Not only are there vast cultural and social differences, but economic development and available resources are such that any attempt at extrapolation is of doubtful validity[1]. We know that disaster in poor and developing countries demands the provision of food and shelter, but we are unclear how best to provide these necessities to people whose lives have, in so many cases, been spent on the borderline between hunger and starvation.

Most of the reports which are generally available concerning disaster relief operations are either too bland and diplomatic, as in the case of UN agency reports, or are written from the tunnel of their own activity in the case of many of the voluntary and charity organisations. The researcher does not acquire any clear idea of how the national administration was operating or how the various UN and international agencies related to one another and most importantly, to the indigenous administration.

Unfortunately, official reports prepared by stricken countries are not generally available. The Department of Administrative Studies for Overseas Visiting Fellows

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[1]Barton, A. H. Disaster Study No 17. National Academy of Science/National Research Council, Washington D.C., U.S.A. (1963).

has been fortunate in being given access to UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Ministry of Overseas Development files and to objective and personal reports by OXFAM personnel, dealing with specific disaster situations. From these a valuable insight has been gained into the nature and cause of administrative failures in many disaster situations. The Disaster Unit within the UK Ministry of Overseas Development is showing interest in following up a proposal which was made early in 1975 to the United Nations Disaster Relief Office. It was proposed that opportunities should be taken to carry out objective, on-site, research into disaster situations in developing countries. This would aim at making assessment of the disaster situations and evaluating post-disaster operations, with a view to building up the experience upon which guidelines for future action, by disaster-prone and developing countries and international relief agencies, should be based.

The need for this expert assessment and evaluation is exemplified by our knowledge that frequently requests for aid are based on hasty, superficial and understandably emotional judgments of the situation and that demands are often greatly in excess of true requirements. Alternatively a rush to help, based on the best of motives, results in large quantities of unnecessary items being sent by expensive air freight. There are strong reasons for suggesting that many of the needs in disaster situations can be met either from within the stricken country or from her immediate neighbours. But we need to know much more about the true needs and the regional availabilities, if realistic plans are to be made. When Managua was all but destroyed by earthquake on Christmas Eve 1972 there was a great rush by charitable organisations in Europe and elsewhere to send tents, blankets and medical aid, basing action to a large degree on the needs of a previous earthquake in Turkey. By 28 December the Government of Nicaragua was endeavouring to stem a flood of unnecessary aid and was seeking cash to purchase locally available necessities instead. Meanwhile, the United States, aided by her proximity to the scene, sent in Disaster Assessment Teams who quickly determined that what was needed was water purification equipment, food and field hospitals to replace those damaged in the earthquake. Most of the population had fled to live with relations, in the extended family situation prevailing in the country, but the survivors in the city were short of water, food and hospitals. The tents and blankets were not required and there were sufficient doctors from Nicaragua and neighbouring Central American countries to cope.

What we need to know

An important prerequisite for rapid and accurate assessment of disaster relief needs is comprehensive and up-to-date information concerning local and regional conditions and resources.

A study of the types of information referred to here will show close relationship to the data which is necessary to national development plans. It follows, therefore, that in those developing and disaster-prone countries with which we are concerned, the cost and effort involved in collecting and collating the data upon which statistics appropriate to disaster preparedness are based would have a valuable return in this much wider field which relates to development strategies. Furthermore, the tech-

niques of management and the administrative, social, cultural and economic problems which are high-lighted in disaster, relate to similar problems which arise in the planning and implementation of development projects too.

For example, studies of the drought and famine situations in Africa and in India indicate increases in herd size in the past, resulting from improvements in animal husbandry. As an element of the development, additional water was usually provided by modern drilling methods but was not always accompanied by improved grazing and the creation of outlets by export or manufacture of the animal products. In consequence, areas became over-grazed but migration of herds to compensate for this and ground water shortages, were often inhibited by rigid political boundaries which had replaced the more flexible administrative boundaries of the colonial era. In drought, herds concentrated in proximity to the drilled wells and quickly grazed out already over-grazed areas. Famine and disaster rapidly followed. This is but one instance illustrating the close relationships which exist between development and pre-disaster planning and indicates how projects for the one should and can embrace studies to prevent the other.

There is already evidence which indicates that major disasters in developing countries attract vast quantities of international and bi-lateral assistance. This relates not only to the phase of immediate post-disaster relief, but projects into the period of reconstruction and continuing development. It is clear therefore, that national disaster preparedness plans must embrace the planning and management of this period of reconstruction and development, so that external assistance can be rapidly and usefully employed.

Pre-Disaster Planning

Within the context of this paper it is not proposed to deal with the process of pre-disaster planning in detail. The following headings however indicate areas which must be considered.

(a) *Vulnerability Analysis*

Areas of the world lie within natural hazard zones and are subject to the effect of one or more of these. The planner must assess the probable effects of the natural phenomena upon the area under consideration with a view to determining how life and livelihoods will be affected and what precautions are necessary and possible.

(b) *Organisation*

Appropriate levels and areas of responsibility must be identified to ensure that those responsible are provided with the authority necessary to carry out their tasks. Responsibility for both planning and co-ordinating the disaster preparedness and relief operation within any specific area must rest with one individual, whom we describe here as the 'Disaster Co-ordinator'. In him must be vested the necessary authority to effect action. The availability of trained men and women in developing countries makes it improbable that the disaster co-ordinator at any level of responsibility will wear this as his only hat. The level of this authority will also differ between countries and administrative systems, but unless it is at a point which ensures that

both in planning and execution the normal administrative procedures can be co-ordinated and adjusted to react to disaster situations, it is unlikely to be fully effective. Disaster planning and management must follow the normal administrative structure – channels of communication and responsibility, with delegated authority within their area of responsibility, passed down to subordinate 'Disaster Co-ordinators'. This is essential to avoid situations in which responsibility is divorced from authority or authority rests with someone without responsibility, or not immediately aware or involved with the situation.

Again we can refer to Dr Bhattacharya's article to see the stimulus provided by 'the Chief Minister's intense involvement' which ensured that authority was placed where responsibility lay, and that hierarchies were modified to suit the requirements of the situation.

(c) *Operations*

At all levels disaster co-ordinators should be served by co-ordinating committees. These will vary in composition in relation to administrative systems, but should be made up of members of the principal elements of the administration and its supporting agencies, notably legal, finance, public utilities and works, public health and medical services, police, fire, transport, military forces and voluntary agencies. At the national level, this committee should also include representation from the local United Nations agencies. At all levels these co-ordinating committees must plan the machinery of management by which they will control response to the initial situation and its development. Planning must include how the available resources are to be integrated into an efficient and manageable whole. This must extend to UN, foreign and international relief of all kinds, and to local voluntary organisations.

Disasters, whether from natural or man-made causes, bring situations frequently demanding continuous, round-the-clock activity. The essential services (medical, police, fire, telecommunications, etc.) are organised to operate in this way. So that the disaster co-ordinator and his Committee can fall into this pattern they must organise themselves so that each member has his deputy who is fully briefed concerning his role and responsibilities. To ignore the difficulties arising even in such apparently simple arrangements would be unwise. The problems of delegating and sharing responsibility are recognised amongst those affecting modern management in sophisticated circumstances. How much larger is the problem likely to be in organisations and societies which are in the process of development? It is nevertheless one of the problems which must be considered in planning crisis management.

Military Forces are well designed and equipped to work along these lines and in addition have the mobility and ability to operate away from their static bases for extended periods of time. Their ability and training to reconnoitre, by land, by sea and from the air, to observe and report back, probably by radio, is in itself an essential and important feature of any disaster relief operation. They are trained in logistic planning which involves the comprehensive integration of all movement,

storage and distribution resources in support of an operation. Those responsible for pre-disaster planning will see the relevance of the military organisation, and particularly of its engineers, to the task of disaster relief.

(d) *Communications*
Information is an essential element of any operation; demanding free and rapid passage of this information not only up and down the chain of command but laterally also, between those engaged in the same operation, It is this free passage of accurate information which provides the material from which decisions and plans are made, precautions can be taken and which permits the co-ordination and co-operation which leads to the effective and most economical employment of often scarce resources.

Plans
Disaster Preparedness plans will result from this necessarily comprehensive process of analysis and matching of the anticipated requirements with the availabilities. Out of this process will come the organisation whose task it will be to plan the action and manage the situation. The plan will identify authority and responsibility and will allocate available resources. Shortages will almost certainly remain but impediments to the utilisation of local resources will be overcome through anticipatory legislative, financial and administrative action and the disaster co-ordinator will know what help he needs from outside.

Action along these lines will create an organisation and a plan to ensure that it can be implemented and will function as intended depends on people. They must be trained and practised in their roles and know how and where they fit into the overall organisation.

Education and Training for Disaster
Early in this paper it was suggested that people are the essential ingredient in any disaster situation. People are also the essential element of disaster preparedness and relief but require programmes of education and training to fit them for their roles in disaster. Education and training are therefore important features of any Disaster Preparedness plan.

We have suggested that pre-disaster planning and disaster preparedness provide not only the most effective but also the most cost-effective way of ensuring the rapid employment of all available human and material resources. It is clear however from surveys by both the United Nations Disaster Relief Office and the League of Red Cross Societies that very few countries in the developing world, even the most disaster-prone, have any formal policy or structure of disaster preparedness. This situation is slowly improving but on a very narrow front and progress is slow and greatly dependent upon individual consultants provided by the United Nations Disaster Relief Organisation (UNDRO).

The proposals relating to education and training which follow emanate from the programme of research at the University of Manchester, and, if implemented,

could greatly broaden the front on which progress in Disaster Preparedness is being made and must also speed its advance.

There are three groups to which the proposed programmes of education and training relate: to those in principal positions of responsibility in the country; to the country's administrators, and to its people.

If action to initiate pre-disaster planning is to be taken it is essential to develop an awareness and understanding in those in responsible positions of government, of the consequences of disaster, of the possibilities of disaster preparedness and of the close relationship between development strategies and planning and pre-disaster planning. Opportunities should be taken to reach responsible members of government, the administration, the press and broadcasting services, and others, by introducing presentations and discussions concerning Disaster Preparedness, whenever this is relevant to the subject under general discussion.

We describe this as Appreciation Education and foresee it as the means of generating and stimulating the understanding and the concern from which all further action will originate. To be effective, this programme of education should be aimed at as wide an audience as possible and should be extended through universities and administrative training colleges throughout the world. By this means, those with the power, responsibility and influence to create public interest and concern will be reached and the foundations of realistic policies of Disaster Preparedness will be laid.

If this Appreciation Education is successful, senior members of the Administration will be identified with responsibility for Disaster Preparedness. In turn their subordinates within the administrative structure will become similarly responsible with delegated responsibility and authority. By this means the channels of management and communication relating to disaster, follow and remain within the normal administrative structure and machinery to provide the most effective means of smoothing the transition from 'normal' to 'disaster' administration, and of minimising the inevitable confusion. Those involved in pre-disaster planning are, almost certainly, also those concerned with the formulation, implementation and administration of development plans and strategies. We foresee that this relationship of responsibilities can only lead to improved strategies affecting both development and pre-disaster planning. Disaster is not merely the concern of the social services.

A dilemma remains unsolved, however, in both developed and developing countries alike and for which there is no generalised solution. Again people are involved; in this case the disaster co-ordinator. In some circumstances the 'normal' administrator can be seen as the ideal 'disaster co-ordinator', in other circumstances he may be seen as an excellent planner of Disaster Preparedness but better suited to the role of chief executive to the disaster co-ordinator. We are now entering the sphere of leadership which must remain as a separate study in itself, but the problem of nominating the disaster co-ordinator must be given careful consideration against the knowledge that disaster situations bring special strains and make heavy demands

upon those with responsibility. It is equally important that their authority is protected and they are free from interference by those with political and other interests but no identifiable responsibility. The best protection almost certainly lies in a sound Disaster Preparedness Plan which clearly defines where responsibility and authority lie.

Disaster Co-ordinator Training

The preparation of disaster co-ordinators for their task is seen as the second tier of the programme. We suggest that the training of senior co-ordinators, at the national and provincial level, should take place on a regional (eg Caribbean, East African, S.E. Asian) basis. Even in the case of larger countries where national training is a requirement, provision for representation from neighbouring countries should be made.

A regional policy of this kind has the advantages that:

a problems are studied against the background of a commonly understood threat; earthquake, hurricane, drought, etc;

b those involved are of similar culture and from countries at similar stages of economic and social development;

c regional co-operation will be engendered by the study of common problems and the realisation that the employment of national and regional resources is likely to provide the most rapid and effective aid;

d it will develop and create a capability to maintain training of this kind as an on-going element of the curricula of regional universities and colleges of administrative training.

Courses planned for Disaster Co-ordinators have three principal objectives:

a study and practice in situation analysis and in the planning processes in relationship to disaster vulnerability and disaster preparedness;

b training through practice in syndicate exercises in the problems and techniques of crisis (disaster) management and resource deployment;

c study of the relationship between development strategies and disaster and of the special problems of disaster proneness in communities.

Co-operation in the study of problems and in developing ways and in training to solve them regionally, is also likely to make the provision of funds and specialists' advice from UN, international and other sources more economical and easier to arrange. It could also lead to the establishment of regional depots where equipment such as shallow-draft boats, water purification equipment, tentage, field hospitals and kitchens, radios and similar specialist equipment might be held in readiness. All of these can be identified as items which have been urgently required in the past and have often had to be transported by air over long distances.

In administrative situations, decisions are usually reached as a result of a consultative process in which the best possible information is brought together over what may be a considerable period. In disaster the converse is likely to be true. The available information will be diverse, conflicting and of doubtful quality;

it may be scarce or abundant but it will most probably be difficult to assess what is accurate and what is inaccurate. Almost certainly, however, there will be urgent calls for action and a need to make decisions based on what is known. Disaster Co-ordinators would be introduced to the problems of operating in these circumstances in the programme of training which is proposed.

These problems are probably most effectively illustrated and studied using the techniques of simulation exercises in which groups play the roles of disaster co-ordinator and his committee. Although simulations have obvious limitations, in these exercises we shall be exposing the participants to situations unusual to them but similar to those which disaster will bring, rather than exercising them in the techniques which they are called upon to employ in the normal course of their duties. This form of training will aim at demanding rapid assessment of confused situations, decision making and the subsequent implementation of plans, all within a demanding time-frame. An analogy will be found in the training of military commanders and staffs whose careers are to a large degree devoted to training for war, a situation which the majority will only experience once in their lifetime. IBM have supported our work in this field by commissioning a study which has successfully defined the parameters within which a computer-based simulation would represent these situations and pressures. The Disaster Simulation is now in the process of development by IBM, Lancaster University and the author. A computer-based simulation of this kind would provide an economical (in teacher/student ratio) means of providing realistic and dynamic training in these techniques on the regional basis proposed.

The foundations of the studies envisaged for disaster co-ordinators are principally techniques of management and relate particularly to the collection, transmission and collation of information and to methods of consultation, co-ordination and communication. These are the means by which decisions are made and resources are rapidly translated into effective action.

In-Country Training

One of the principal responsibilities of disaster co-ordinators in appointments at all levels will be the preparation of the plan which mobilises, co-ordinates and deploys national resources in relief work in time of disaster.

A central plan will co-ordinate the activities of a number of organisations all with specific responsibilities and roles and all fulfilling their particular part of this central plan. Ultimately, however, implementation of all the various elements of this central plan is dependent upon the ability of individuals and groups of people to carry out their allotted tasks. This requires a comprehensive understanding of their own particular task, training for this task, and practice in it. In order to base the training of national disaster relief organisations upon clear objectives, there are strong and obvious arguments that this training should relate directly to tasks defined in a national Disaster Preparedness Plan. For example, first-aid workers and para-medicals will be trained both as individuals and as members of a group. But, until they become an element of an overall plan which ensures that they are directed

to where they are most needed and can get there, that the victims whom they treat can be evacuated to a hospital or centre ready to receive them, then the training of these individuals is unlikely to reach full potential. Once the national Disaster Preparedness Plan exists however, all training can be based upon realistic objectives and ceases to be open-ended. Those involved become aware of how they fit into the overall organisation and plan and know what is required of them.

Specialist training for disaster of this kind should take place 'in-country' and as far as possible within the organisation and group in which the individual will operate. Such methods develop the team spirit upon which successful operations in difficult circumstances depend so much and also ensures that those involved are aware of the conditions in which they will have to operate, of their own limitations and capabilities as a team and how to make the best use of the available equipment.

Besides individual and group training which develops skills and capabilities there is also the need for practice and exercises in order to develop the capabilities of many separate units to work together. This calls for realistic exercises in which operating procedures are tested and developed. Such exercises make demands on the imagination of those designing them and must aim at creating the unexpected and demanding initiative. They should seek to test and develop the systems of communications so that all learn the importance of passing information not only down the chain of command but up it and laterally as well. In this way all those operating together are aware of the situation in adjoining areas, have warning of developing problems and dangers and can prepare accordingly.

Exercises can be designed to test various parts of the plan and reveal needs for modifications and improvement. To be effective they must be held at planned intervals so that new personnel can be trained and opportunities created to remedy past errors and to test modifications and improved solutions.

To help develop this all-round capability it is proposed that regional training programmes should be supported by an advisory service which will help developing countries initiate pre-disaster planning and disaster preparedness, including training programmes.

At present the proposal[1] has been put to those United Nations agencies such as UNDP, UNESCO, UNEP and UNDRO who have a defined responsibility or interest in disaster seeking their sponsorship.[2] The UK Ministry of Overseas Development and the Commonwealth Secretariat are also interested and in certain circumstances are ready to support the programme proposed.

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[1] 'Regional and In-Country Programmes of Education and Training in Disaster Awareness, Pre-Disaster Planning and Disaster Management'. Lt Col G. N. Ritchie, Department of Administrative Studies, University of Manchester, Lancashire, England.

[2] 'The UN could build success out of disaster'. Chalfont, *The London Times*, Monday, 6 December, 1976.

Conclusion

In the last few months there have been significant developments on these proposals. In September 1976 the Commonwealth Secretariat and the League of Red Cross Societies jointly sponsored a seminar in Fiji when senior public servants from most countries of the South Pacific examined their disaster situation problems. This was a successful meeting, particularly in the way that it stimulated these countries' awareness of the importance of their own resources. It is hoped that it will be followed by a course for disaster co-ordinators at the University of the South Pacific and by further studies relating to the disaster vulnerability of the area and its peoples.

More recently a meeting was held in London when many representatives from international, national, official and charitable bodies discussed the possibilities of offering corresponding assistance to countries in the Caribbean area. It must be hoped that these discussions will bear fruit and that these ideas will develop and spread to those other areas of the world where poor and developing countries are so frequently struck by disasters.

Understanding and awareness of the necessity and the advantages of pre-disaster planning and preparedness is growing and it is clear that education and training provide the most rapid and cost-effective means of improving and stimulating indigenous capabilities. Some proportion of the vast sums presently allocated to development projects and disaster relief should be earmarked for this sensible form of insurance.

Bureaucracy & Professionalization: Toward Management Improvement in Nigeria*

HARRY A. GREEN**

A significant problem in modernizing African countries has been the professionalization of the public services. Within a few years of independence, most African countries, particularly Anglophone, had established training institutions, and nearly completed the Africanization process.[1] The problem of professionalization however, has not been so easily solved. There has been resistance from within the civil service as well as from without. Moreover, there is no general consensus about the qualities, traits, and skills that professional public servants should possess.[2]

Further, there is the problem of multiple professionalism within the single institution of the civil service. In time, doctors, lawyers, engineers, architects, administrators, scientists, soldiers, and the like, will all hold professional positions in government. Professional performance, then, is influenced by the plethora of professional groups and by the conditions of service and performance standards of the government service.

The politics of nationalism demanded Africanization; the politics of rising expectations demanded African performance. Therefore, some politically workable strategy was required to achieve both. Thus, crash training programmes were established and some expatriates were retained. One inevitable result, as one African expert has put it, was the 'massive dilution of experience'.[3]

The emergent situation from Africanization was one of ambiguity, complexity, and, in many countries, a political and bureaucratic conservatism. As African nationalists gained power and influence, the goals of social and economic reform were muted by the achievement of status and high-salaried positions. Professionalism, which is

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*The United Nations does not necessarily share the views expressed in this article.

**Professor Green is a United Nations Consultant and Visiting Professor of Public Administration, Institute of Administration, University of Ife.

[1]See Adebayo Adedeji, 'Formulating Administrative Reform Strategies in Africa'. *Quarterly Journal of Administration*, 6, 3 (April, 1972).

[2]Vide Harry A. Green, 'Is Urban Administration Different?' *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 1975.

[3]Adedeji, *op cit*, p 224.

believed to be one of the requirements for significant social and economic reform, apparently was not high in the rank-order of priorities. To professionalize meant, among other things, to turn power over to specialists or better educated generalists; to call attention to the fact that many of those at the top were not really competent; and, of course, professionalization meant a threat to the newly-won status and prestige. Thus, the 'result has been frustration in the lower echelon of the civil services and a feeling of inadequacy in the upper levels'.[1]

Rapid Africanization has inevitably generated significant conflict among different elite groups that has sometimes resulted in violence and disorder. The *coup d'etat* has been the more common temporary solution to this problem. And, it is significant to note, military intervention often brings in its wake *professional* standards of governance rather than political. Proposals for administrative reform in Nigeria were delayed first by changes of government and then by the civil war.

In 1970, soon after the end of the war, the Gowon regime created a Salaries and Wages Review Commission to study the problems of remuneration in the public services. As a result of this exercise, this Commission recognized that there were related problems that went beyond their terms of reference and it was recommended that a general review of the public service be undertaken. Subsequently, in September 1972, the Federal Military Government established the Public Service Review Commission which recently submitted its report.

The purpose of this article is to analyze the findings of the Public Service Review Commission[2] in relationship to the issue of professionalism in the public service.

Professionalism

The phenomenon of professionalism is a function of modernization. Growth and expansion of increasingly complex technology has given rise to the need for greater and greater specialism, which, in turn, has created a need to rationalize specialization in intellectual terms. The organization of specialist interests has led to the establishment of criteria to distinguish professional groups; control of membership of the group; control over the qualifications for entry into the group; and, the establishment of standards of ethical conduct.

Harold Wilensky has pointed out that there are two 'elements' common to all professions.[3] In the first place, professional tasks are technical. By this he means that professional tasks require a special knowledge and skill that is obtained after long and prescribed education. However, this 'technical' knowledge need not necessarily be scientific.

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[1] *Ibid*, p 225.

[2] Popularly known as the Udoji Commission, after its Chairman, Chief J. Udoji.

[3] Harold L. Wilensky, 'Experts Abroad: Problems of the Application of Social Science to Foreign Aid', in Guy Benveniste and W. F. Ilchman (eds). *Agents of Change: Professionals in Developing Countries*. New York: Praeger, 1969, p 61.

Secondly, Wilensky asserts that professional 'norms' which include 'the service ideal' are characteristic of all professions. This ideal is the notion that 'devotion to the client's interest should guide decisions more than personal or commercial profit,'[1] and he notes in a succeeding passage:

> The degree of professionalization is measured not just by the degree of success in the claim to exclusive technical competence, but also by the degree of adherence to the service ideal and its supporting norms of professional conduct.[2]

The PSRC was charged with 'having regard to the need to secure adequate development and optimum utilisation of manpower, and to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Public Services.'[3] More specifically it was directed to:

1 examine the organization structure and management of the Public Service, and recommend reforms where desirable;
2 investigate and evaluate the methods of recruitment and conditions of employment, and the staff development programmes . . . and recommend such changes as may be necessary;
3 undertake . . . the regrading of all posts . . . establish scales of salaries . . . and recommend salary scales to be applicable to each post in the services.

An analysis of these directions reveals that the PSRC was not specifically instructed to recommend proposals for professionalizing the Public Services. However, this objective is cohesively articulated in the *Main Report*, and one finds the elements of the objectives scattered throughout the document as the *Report* itself indicates.[4] In its analysis of the proposed 'New Style Public Service', the PSRC states:

> All this requires a Public Service staffed and led by professionals . . . who possess the requisite skills and knowledge, and can function effectively in applying skills and knowledge to establish goals and achieve results. The professional civil servant is a specialist in a particular field . . . and keeps himself abreast of advances in his field. He joins professional associations, subscribes to journals, attends seminars, and adapts himself to the latest advances and techniques in his field of specialization.[5]

The principal problem of professionalizing the public service was cogently stated by the PSRC: 'Of the various problems facing public management in Nigeria, by far the most serious is the shortage of experienced skilled manpower. This constraint is seen in all categories and all levels of the services.'[6] This is not, of course, a new phenomenon for Nigeria and it is not the first time that it has been observed, analyzed and noted. The legacy of colonial days, the urgent imperative of political independence, and the limitation of training capacity, all contributed to the problem

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[1] *Ibid*, p 65.
[2] *Ibid*, p 66.
[3] Federal Republic of Nigeria, Public Service Review Commission. *Main Report*, Lagos, 1974, p iii.
[4] *Ibid*, p 7.
[5] *Ibid*.
[6] *Ibid*, p 2.

now considered by the PSRC. Kenneth Younger observed fifteen years ago that 'if development plans meet with any success at all, it is hard to foresee the time when local sources will be able to supply the constantly increasing needs'[1] of professional and technical personnel. This observation was made before the extent of her oil wealth made its impact on Nigerian society, and before the creation of thirteen public services to replace the previous four. Thus, in all probability, the overall problem is more severe at present than at the time of Younger's surveys in Nigeria and Ghana.[2]

One principal reason for this state of manpower affairs has been a perpetuation of the 'colonial heritage' in terms of education and administration; an educational system that only prepares students for university education, and the classical British 'generalist' approach to administration. As the PSRC noted:

> 'The entire educational system appeared to be one long road to the university: primary led to secondary and secondary led to the university. The system virtually aimed at producing a race of professors rather than farmers and tradesmen'.[3]

Thus, it is not surprising that the Commission found 'a pervasive lack of appreciation of the role of specialized knowledge and professional training in the management of the public service.'[4] An educational system ill-designed for a developing society, a focus on humanities rather than science and technical subjects, and an administrative system oriented to control rather than developmental purposes could not create an environment in which specialism and training are appreciated.

Towards a Professional Service

The idea of professionalizing the public services is first and foremost a management improvement strategy of national development. There are several important assumptions of such a strategy that are far from being universally accepted and they should be made explicit:

1 Public Services are the central requirement of modern government;
2 In developing countries, the public service is invariably the only institution with the necessary talents, skills, and overall manpower to manage a national scheme of development;
3 Because of its repository of manpower, the public service increasingly has been asked to extend its responsibilities beyond its administrative capacity;
4 There are no other institutions in society that can perform the role as 'engine' of development;

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[1] Kenneth Younger, *The Public Service in New States*, London: Oxford University Press, 1960, p. 88.

[2] Chief Udoji has estimated the present training requirements for the managerial and supervisory levels at 100,000 civil servants; see J. O. Udoji, 'The Implications of the Public Service Review Commission's Report for Management Education and Training,' *Quarterly Journal of Administration*, v 1, October, 1975.

[3] *Main Report*, p 135.

[4] *Ibid*, p 4.

5 If (1), (2), (3) and (4) are accepted, there is no alternative to expanding and improving the Public Service in terms of numbers, commitment and effectiveness.

As one carefully analyzes these assumptions, one finds the rudiments of a justification for modern technocracy and, in essence the development administration model. Also, one finds a sufficient degree of reality in most of these assumptions to warrant their acceptance in the short run. There are, however, many writers who would argue for an opposite approach. That is to say, developing nations should sacrifice short-term economic development (and hence public service development) for long-term political development and stability. Fred Riggs and Lucian Pye are well-known exponents of this view.[1]

The recommendations of the PSRC and their acceptance by the Nigerian regime leave no doubt about the development role envisaged for the public service. As Table I illustrates, there are eight major components of the PSRC approach which is best described as a strategy to strengthen the Public Service, and to improve its capacity. The question of its major and proper role for Nigerian development was assumed *ab initio* and was not considered as an arguable value.

TABLE I
Professionalizing the Public Services in Nigeria

1	Professional skills and knowledge
2	Managerial abilities (for management and supervisory levels) and managerial techniques
3	Merit principle in selection and promotion
4	Professional conduct:
	a Code of Ethics (normative behaviour)
	b Civil service discipline (internal control)
	c Ombudsman – (external control)
5	Equal pay for equal work
6	Specialism
7	New style of management
8	Professional training (priority in managerial training)

Adapted from Public Service Review Commission *Main Report*.

Problems of Professionalization

The essence of the PSRC recommendations is that they are seeking to move Nigerian Public Services from a semi to complete professionalism. The pre-Udoji situation can best be described as uneven or unbalanced, with some services more professional than others. For example, it is easy to show that the Federal Service and the Universities are more thoroughly professionalized than most of the States. Moreover,

[1]Fred Riggs, 'Bureaucrats and Political Development: A Paradoxical View', in Joseph LaPalombara (ed) *Bureaucracy and Political Development*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963; and Lucian Pye, *Political Aspects of Development*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1964.

it can easily be argued that some States have made more progress than others. PSRC, however, made no attempt to adumbrate the issue.

PSRC has emphasized the need to upgrade the abilities of incumbent civil servants as well as insisting on merit or performance criteria for entrance and promotion. In this context, the *Main Report* stresses the importance of the proper relationships with the universities for research and proper pre-entry education and for post-entry training, both on-the-job and off-the-job.

Thus, a comprehensive professional training programme must focus on three levels or in three areas: the management specialist, the professional-cum-administrator, and the professional specialist.

In the first instance, the PSRC joined the Fulton Committee in its criticism of the generalist. Therefore, in the 'New Style Public Service', all managers must become specialists in management or be 'professionally trained in management.'[1] This will require management training for a considerable number of generalists who have not been professionally trained in management, but who after years of service have become specialists in the existing practices and techniques of the Public Services. Persons in this category, particularly those near the top may not find much joy in the prospect of accepting and absorbing the changes that the PSRC envisages.

Secondly, the problem of the professional-cum-administrator is clearly drawn. Persons in this category are to be found who are not necessarily well skilled in the formalism of existing administrative practices. Some, indeed, are no longer competent in their professional fields and are untrained in managerial knowledge. Depending on the objectives of training, it would be proper to consider combining the up-grading of professional knowledge with management training. Experience has shown that professionals in line for transfer from professional to managerial positions should be sent for management training *prior* to transfer.

Thirdly, there is the problem of all professionals and all organizations that employ them: that is, the problem of keeping up to date in one's own particular field. Although the PSRC defined the professional civil servant[2] as a person who 'keeps abreast of advances in his field', and 'adapts himself to the latest advances and techniques', and who 'is constantly learning' – this over-simplifies the issue. The most effective way to achieve this objective is some type of periodic intensive training, conducted off-the-job; however, this may create some special institutional performance problems when there are critical shortages in some professional cadres.

Another area to which the PSRC devoted an important emphasis is the question of control of the bureaucracy. In terms of development issues, it is difficult for the Public Services to avoid being deeply involved in policy matters. And, as one aspect of the management improvement strategy, the matter of control is counter-poised

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[1] *Main Report*, p 4.
[1] *Main Report*, p 20.

with the matter of increased effectiveness. This issue of control centred around a code of ethics, civil service discipline, punishment of criminal behaviour, and the creation of an ombudsman to handle citizen grievances.[1] The PSRC clearly stated its position on the matter: 'that public office is a public trust, that honest and efficient performance will be rewarded, that dishonesty and inefficiency will not be condoned, and that corruption will be punished wherever it is found.'[2]

The PSRC stressed the value and importance of training throughout its Report. Training, in essence, is the medium through which the proposed improvement strategy is to work. However, the nature of the required training programme, its content and its methodology was left largely undefined. It is unfortunate that so much attention was given to the role of training for change, and so little attention given to the substance of training itself.[3] It is not a new phenomenon, however, to view education and training as the panacea for all sorts of social, economic and administrative problems.

The Report, however, was not completely silent on the issues of training content, training methodologies and the performance of training institutions. For example, the PSRC noted that institution-based training must be linked to 'work-centered' training; for the institution this 'means redesigning both the curricula and the methodology to ensure their relevance.'[4] Moreover, the PSRC observed that 'present training institutions, by themselves' cannot cope with the training demand and this inability requires a review and modification of 'the present training system to ensure its relevance and efficiency' *and* the application of 'new approaches and methods to apply most effectively all available training resources.'[5] Further, the Commission noted that its recommendations 'for a relevant and results-oriented training programme . . . should affect all participating institutions' which 'should change and grow to meet the new requirements of the new style management.'[6]

The only other method to obtain professional manpower is through recruitment. And, of particular significance, the Commission found fault with the Government's recruitment policy. Basically, the PSRC found the policy to be ambiguous and lacking the focus of a positive policy that is required for the results-oriented management recommended by the Commission. Even the execution of existing policy, with its fundamental negative character, has not been pursued forcefully. The PSRC found that the Public Service Commission (PSC) has advertised positions *only* when

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[1]The Gowon Government did not accept the Ombudsman recommendation. It noted the recommendation with an indication that it would be studied further. See *Government Views on the Report of the Public Service Review Commission*, p 9. However, the new regime that came to power as a result of the July 29 coup, has established a public complaints agency.

[2]*Main Report*, p 3.

[3]For a more thorough analysis of this point, see Harry A. Green, 'Administrative Training: Some Implications of the Udoji Commission Report', *Quarterly Journal of Administration*, v X.1 (October, 1975).

[4]*Ibid*, p 22.

[5]*Ibid*, p 21.

[6]*Ibid*, p 24.

requested to do so by the various ministries. Therefore, vacancies frequently were not advertised and were filled usually by unsolicited applications. The selection process was based upon interviews conducted by the PSC lasting between 15 to 30 minutes, and questions pertained primarily to the candidate's education attain-attainments and previous work experience, but no systematic attempts have been made to discover 'traits, interests and abilities' desired of public administrators.

Conclusions

The most important aspects of the PSRC report are the recommendations to professionalize the Public Services. The Commission's view of professionalized public management incorporate technical competence, performance orientation, functional and management specialism, a new style of management, and an ethos of public conduct or behaviour.[1]

The objective of professionalism is to improve the capacity of the Public Services to achieve development goals. Nigerian professionalism, thus, is designed to achieve the following objectives:

1 to substitute a results-initiative orientation for a passive-reactive one;
2 to promote development-oriented co-ordination among Public Service institutions;
3 to contain and eliminate corruption in the Public Services;
4 to recruit staff on the basis of performance potential and to promote on the basis of performance;
5 to promote the evaluation of institutional and programme performance;
6 to promote and enhance staff morale;
7 to expedite decision-making and the process of communications;
8 to promote individual and institutional flexibility for problem-solving purposes.

The methodology for achieving this professionalism is, by and large, staff training: immediate training for those who lack requisite skills, and a continuous training programme for upgrading and acquiring new skills. The PSRC did not fully address itself to the question of the competence and capacity of existing training institutions, nor assess their potential contribution to meet the overall demand, indeed the Commission could scarcely have conducted in the time available a thorough analysis of the training system, training needs, and training efficiency and a special study will be required for this purpose. However, this is an important issue that can not long be neglected if the goal of professionalization is to be achieved.

The larger question of attitude and behavioural change was not examined in depth by the PSRC. It is one thing, for example, to train persons in modern management techniques; it is quite another to motivate people and institutions to use them. It is one thing to prescribe the code of ethical behaviour, it is quite another to convince people to follow its tenets. These are factors which will need careful attention, in particular by all those concerned with training the 'new-look' public servants.

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[1] *Supra*, Table I.

Furthermore, as Harold Wilensky has noted, professionalism, particularly its technical side, may be a double-edged sword. On the one hand it encourages initiative, independent judgment and effectiveness within the area of specialization. On the other hand, it can lead to 'parochial conservatism' and narrowness on matters that typically fall outside the special area.

On the ethical or service side of professionalism there is the problem of conflict between professional ideal and organizational requirements. Few would relish the thought of anyone yielding, on a matter of principle, to organization fiat. Likewise, few would like to see professionals hide behind professionalism to prevent new policy and programme changes. Technique must not be allowed to become the master of purpose.

A development-oriented public service must devise a strategy that promotes and rewards the best features of professionalism, while containing and punishing the worst features. This will be no easy task, and there are likely to be many casualties. In the absence of extra-bureaucratic power centres, the government of the day will need to be mindful of the complexity of multiple professionalism in the public service.

Aftermath

By and large, the professionalization recommendations of the PSRC were accepted by the Gowon government.[1] Soon after the Report was published, a Public Service Review Unit was created and attached to the Federal Ministry of Establishments for the purpose of implementing the recommendations accepted by the Government.

Following agitation and incidents of industrial unrest concerning job ratings and salaries, the Review Unit was reconstituted as a Public Service Review Panel, with the purpose of examining complaints and grievances arising from the implementation of PSRC's job and salary recommendations.

Meanwhile, other aspects of the PSRC recommendations are being implemented and repercussions are still being evaluated. For example, the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON) and the Institute of Administration, University of Ife, are busy offering courses and training relative to the 'New Style Public Service'.

As a result of the *coup d'etat* on July 29, 1975, a new government was brought to power. The actions of the new regime appear to indicate its acceptance of the PSRC's recommendations. One of its first and on-going tasks was to take vigorous action against corruption, and managerial inefficiency in the public service. This resulted in the retirement of the former military leaders and investigation into the past conduct of several of them. Moreover, many of the top civil servants have been discharged, and their conduct too, is being investigated.

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[1]See Federal Republic of Nigeria. *Government Views on the Report of the Public Service Review Commission*, Lagos: Federal Ministry of Information, December, 1974.

If there was any doubt about the commitment of the new government to the professionalism recommended by PSRC, it is put to rest by a recent government statement:

'The government has therefore decided to expand and strengthen the Public Service Review Unit of the Federal Ministry of Establishments whose main function will be to direct and give leadership and commitment to the total implementation effort throughout the Public Service and above all to ensure the smooth *transition from the old to the new style Public Service.*'[1]

[1]Federal Republic of Nigeria. *Government Views on the Report of the Public Service Review Unit*, Lagos: Federal Ministry of Information, September, 1975, p 3 (my emphasis).

Administration in China: some preliminary observations

DIANA CONYERS*

The material presented in this article was obtained from a three week visit to China in April and May 1976 and from a survey of the relevant literature. I certainly do not profess to be a 'three-week expert' on China and in normal circumstances would not venture to put pen to paper on the basis of such limited experience. However, for a number of reasons I feel that, in this case, it is worth setting down some preliminary facts and impressions, at least as a foundation for further debate and discussion.

One reason for writing is that first-hand experience of China is still relatively rare, in spite of the increasing number of overseas visitors to the country. Moreover, several valuable books and articles on China have been written after equally short visits[1] and, in some cases, without going there at all. More important is the fact that there has not been a great volume of material written on the Chinese administrative system in recent years. The most comprehensive studies, such as those by Schurmann, Waller and Doak Barnett,[2] are really relevant only to the situation before the Cultural Revolution, giving little or no information on the major changes which have taken place since then. Moreover even these works concentrate mainly on the political, rather than the administrative, side of the organizational structure. This bias is understandable in view of the importance and unique qualities of the political system and its enormous influence over all aspects of administration. Nevertheless, it does mean that the role and organisation of the administrative system itself, which is also very different from that of any other country, has not received as much attention as is perhaps due. Finally, there seems to have been very little conscious

*Diana Conyers is now a lecturer at the Papua New Guinea Administrative College. She was previously a Research Fellow at the Papua New Guinea Institute of Applied Social Research and was earlier at Dar es Salaam University and then at Canberra.

[1]One of the most useful general sources of information on China especially for those about to visit the country, is Peter Worsley's *Inside China* (London: Allen Lane, 1975), written after a three week visit. Journals such as the *China Quarterly* often publish articles based on similarly short visits.

[2]Schurmann, F., *Ideology and Organization in Communist China* (University of California Press, 1971); Waller, D. J., *The Government and Politics of Communist China* (Hutchinson University Library, 1970); Barnett, A. Doak, *Cadres, Bureaucracy and Power in Communist China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967).

effort to examine the relevance – if there is any – of the Chinese administration to other developing countries. Most articles are published in journals concerned only with China (such as the *China Quarterly*) and the tendency is to look at the Chinese model in isolation, rather than in terms of comparative administration.

In this article I outline the main feature of the present organizational structure in China, with particular emphasis on the administrative aspects, and then make some preliminary comments on the possible relevance of this structure in other parts of the Third World. Because of the lack of up-to-date literature and the difficulties of obtaining first-hand information during a short visit to China – owing to language difficulties and the enormous complexity and variety of the organizational system – it is possible that I have made some factual errors in the material presented. I would therefore welcome any corrections or comments on either the data itself or its interpretation.

The organizational structure

China's basic organizational structure is shown in Figure 1. The country is divided into 29 administrative units, of which 21 are provinces, five are autonomous regions and three are the municipalities of Peking, Tientsin and Shanghai. The autonomous regions, which are located in the northwest and southwest of the country, are inhabited by minority nationalities – that is, by people who do not belong to the Han nationality. Their organizational structure is basically similar to that of the provinces but they have somewhat more autonomy and modifications are made in their development pattern to allow for their individual needs and conditions. Table I shows the approximate area and population of each of these administrative units.[1]

The main units are subdivided into a series of lower levels. In the rural areas the main divisions are administrative areas (known as special districts until 1971), counties, people's communes, production brigades and production teams. There are approximately 2,000 counties, 75,000 communes, 700,000 brigades and five million teams.[2] The population of each unit varies enormously. Counties, which have an estimated average population of about 300,000,[3] *are roughly comparable with districts in many former British territories.* Most communes are between 20,000 and 50,000 but some may be larger* or smaller. Brigades vary from less than 500 to 2,000 or 3,000 and teams from 100 to 400 people.

Urban areas are subdivided into districts, neighbourhoods and streets (or residence areas). Neighbourhoods and streets correspond approximately to communes and

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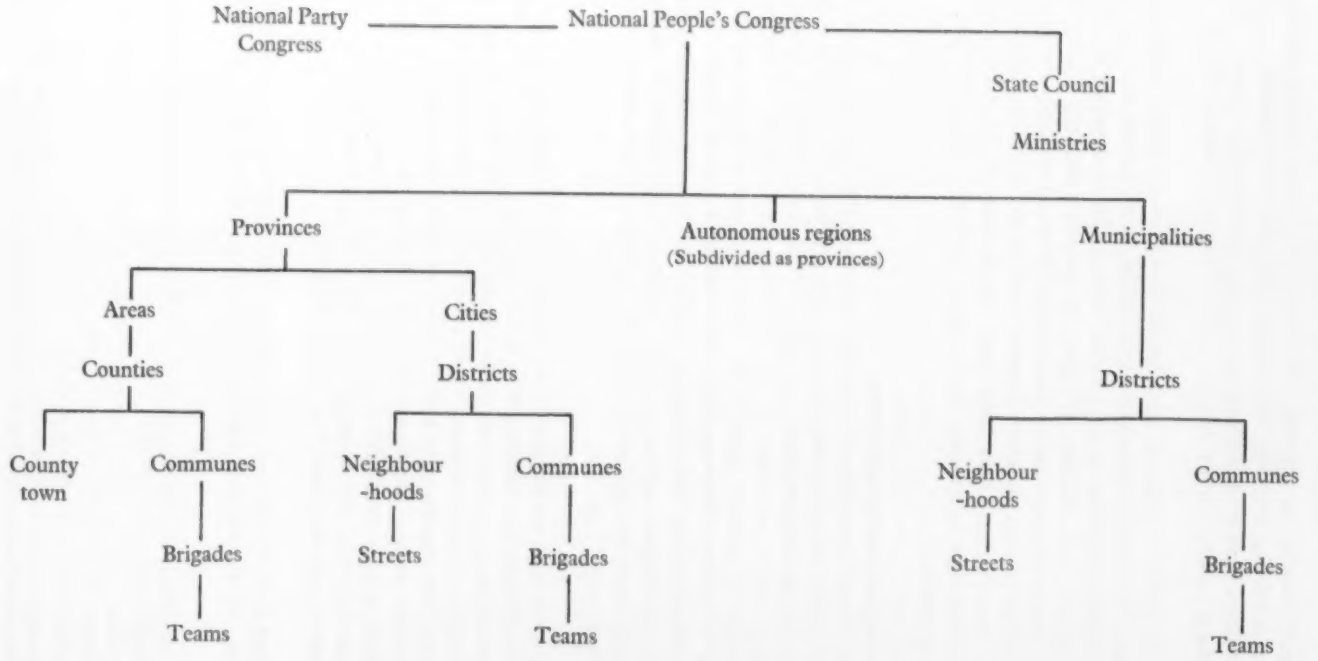
[1]China officially recognises 30 administrative divisions of provincial status; the thirtieth is the so-called province of Taiwan.

[2]Mehnert, K., *China Today* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1972) and Shabad, T., *China's Changing Map* (London: Methuen, 1972).

[3]Shabad, *China's Changing Map, op cit.*

* *As a result of population growth over the past five or six years, communes of 60,000 people and above, are now quite common in the richer agricultural areas* (Ed).

FIGURE 1 *China's Organizational Structure*



brigades in the rural areas, but they generally have a larger population and much smaller land area.[1] An important feature of the Chinese system is that the boundaries

TABLE I *China: Major Administrative Areas*

	1970 *estimates*	
	Area	*Population*
Provinces	('000 *sq.mls*)	(*million*)
Anhwei	54	39
Chekiang	39	31
Fukien	48	18
Heilungkiang	280	25
Honan	65	55
Hopei	75	46
Hunan	81	41
Hupei	72	35
Kansu	190	16
Kiangsi	64	25
Kiangsu	40	51
Kirin	110	21
Kwangtung	83	40
Kweichow	67	20
Liaoning	90	29
Shansi	61	20
Shantung	60	60
Shensi	76	22
Szechwan	220	75
Tsinghai	280	2.5
Yunnan	168	25
Autonomous regions		
Inner Mongolia	225	9
Kwangsi Chuang	91	25
Ningsia Hui	40	2.5
Sinkiang Uigur	640	10
Tibet	470	1.5
Metropolitan areas		
Peking	6.6	7
Shanghai	2.2	10
Tientsin	1.2	4

Source Shabad, *China's Changing Map*, *op cit*, chapter 2.

[1] Some people consider that neighbourhoods and streets correspond to brigades and teams – cf Robinson, J., *Economic Management in China* (London: Anglo-Chinese Education Institute, 1975), p 15 – but my impression was that, in terms of both population and functions, they are more comparable with communes and brigades.

of cities are drawn to include a substantial amount of rural land (divided into communes as in other rural areas) around the urban core. This is to enable the cities to be to some extent self-sufficient in food production.

When discussing this hierarchy of political and administrative units[1] it is important to recognize the distinction between State and collective ownership or control. All the administrative units from the national to the county (or, in urban areas, the district) level are part of the State government structure. This means that any enterprises (such as factories) or institutions operated at these levels produce goods or services for the State – or, as the Chinese say, 'for the whole of the Chinese people'; the workers are paid wages by the State and all profits go to the State. In contrast, the communes and neighbourhoods (and their subdivisions) are units of collective ownership, in the sense that their resources, assets and activities are owned and controlled by the people of that particular commune or neighbourhood.

The nearest equivalent in western terms is the distinction between central and local governments, with the communes and neighbourhoods representing the basic units of rural and urban local government. However, the comparison is only partially valid because the various administrative divisions in the Chinese system are much more than mere units of local administration or government in a western sense. Thus, for example, a commune is responsible for all resource use, production and the provision of services in the area, not just the limited functions of a local government. The commune is, in fact, 'a brand-new social organization unifying leadership of politics, economy, military affairs and culture.'[2]

At each level in the administrative hierarchy it is convenient to recognize three interlocking organizational systems: the government, the Party and the administration. The official government structure consists of a hierarchy of representative assemblies, normally known as people's congresses. At the lowest levels (commune, brigade and team in the rural areas and neighbourhood and street in the cities), these assemblies are directly elected by all the people in the area. At higher levels, however, members are indirectly elected by assemblies at the lower levels. Thus, for example, a county assembly is made up of members chosen by the assemblies of every commune in the county.* The highest level and the supreme legislative body is the National People's Congress.

In practice, however, the elected assemblies have played a very minor role in govern-

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[1] Terms such as 'hierarchy' and 'upper' and 'lower' levels of administration are used with some reservation. The Chinese do not regard the 'upper' levels as being in a real sense superior; in fact, in terms of the Chinese philosophy of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the 'lower' levels are if anything more important. However, it is difficult to find alternative terms which convey their meaning accurately and concisely.

[2] *The People's Communes*, pamphlet reproduced within China from the journal *China Reconstructs* (January, 1972), p 2.

* *Observers have obtained little response to feelings about the county, from an agricultural population which sees itself living in a commune and whose interests lie there and in the happenings in neighbouring communes* (Ed).

ment, especially since the Cultural Revolution. They meet infrequently and in some cases may be virtually non-existent. The actual work of government at every level is undertaken by a working committee, originally known as a people's council but since the Cultural Revolution replaced by the revolutionary committee. Revolutionary committees are now the most important instruments of government at all levels and in all institutions. They were originally composed of three groups of people: workers, cadres and members of the army. However, in most areas the role of the army has since diminished and the emphasis now is on equal representation of workers, technical cadres and political cadres and of the young, middle-aged and elderly. Elections are held every three years and, in order to ensure vertical coordination and conformity within the government hierarchy, the members of a revolutionary committee have to be approved by the committee of the level above. The committees appoint sub-committees (such as an executive or planning committee) to deal with specific aspects of government, depending on the needs of the community or area.

The organization of the Chinese Communist Party is closely linked to the government structure. There is a Party committee at every level and the members of the Party and revolutionary committees overlap; a majority of the members of a revolutionary committee are usually Party members. The Party structure thus ensures that central Party policies are transmitted to all levels in the system and integrated into the daily activities and decision-making of all organizations, although the direct influence of the Party has diminished somewhat since the Cultural Revolution.

The third system is the administrative structure. At the national level administration is carried out through a ministerial structure. There are currently 26 ministries and three State commissions headed by ministers. These are listed in Table II. The ministers constitute the State Council, or cabinet, which is headed by the premier and responsible to the National People's Congress. Below the national level each administrative area establishes its own administrative structure, varying in size and complexity according to the size of the area and the type of activities carried out within it. At the upper levels the administrative structure is divided into a number of departments or divisions, usually known as bureaux and often corresponding roughly to the ministerial divisions at the national level. The bureaux are directly responsible to the revolutionary committee in the area but they are also closely linked to the appropriate national ministry. They are responsible to the ministry for fulfilling their share of national targets and the ministries usually have a few staff located in the provinces, often down to the area or city level, to ensure vertical planning and coordination between levels.

The administrative structure is closely linked to the other two systems at all levels. Party members are appointed to key administrative positions and administrative staff are responsible to the Party and revolutionary committees in their own area in the manner described above. This ensures that national and local policies are closely followed by the administrative system and improves administrative coordination within an area, thereby reducing some of the communication problems associated with an entirely centralized ministerial structure.

TABLE II

China: Ministries and State Commissions

1	Foreign Affairs
2	National Defence
3	Public Security
4	Foreign Trade
5	Economic Relations with Foreign Countries
6	Agriculture and Forestry
7	Metallurgical Industry
8	First Machine-Building
9	Second Machine-Building
10	Third Machine-Building
11	Fourth Machine-Building
12	Fifth Machine-Building
13	Sixth Machine-Building
14	Seventh Machine-Building
15	Coal and Industry
16	Petrol and Chemical Industries
17	Water Conservation and Power
18	Light Industries
19	Railways
20	Communications
21	Posts and Telecommunications
22	Finance
23	Commerce
24	Culture
25	Education
26	Public Health
27	State Planning Commission
28	State Capital Construction Commission
29	Physical Culture and Sports Commission

In addition to the basic administrative units there are also individual economic enterprises and institutions at each level which have their own organizational structure. For example, a factory attached to (or, as the Chinese say, 'under the leadership of') a county or province has its own revolutionary and Party committees and looks after its own internal organization, although it is responsible to the appropriate section of the county or provincial administration. Even the luxury hotels which provide accommodation for overseas visitors have their own committee structure. People who work in such a factory or institution are normally represented by the revolutionary committee at their place of work, not the neighbourhood revolutionary committee in the area where they live. Neighbourhood committees

are therefore primarily concerned with the welfare of those people who have no outside employment, such as the young and old and full-time housewives.

One other important feature of the organizational structure which is significantly different from that of western countries is the role of cadres. Cadres are found in all types of organization and at all levels of the administrative hierarchy; they are, in effect, the leaders and initiators of the organization. There are three main types of cadre within the basic organizational structure: technical, administrative and political. Thus, for example, in a factory there are technical cadres who are concerned primarily with the control of the technical side of production, administrative cadres concerned with administration and management, and political cadres who are responsible for Party leadership and direction. However, these divisions of responsibility are not rigid. Cadres (and all others involved in administration and management) are expected to participate in other activities, and in particular in productive labour, as well as fulfilling their leadership role; while the ordinary peasants and workers are encouraged to take an active part in administrative and technical management. This important characteristic of the Chinese system is discussed further in the next section.

The most desirable qualities of a good cadre are 'correct' political thinking and the willingness to work together with the workers and peasants; any élitist tendencies are strongly discouraged. These requirements are reflected in the special cadre training schools (known as May 7 cadre schools in commemoration of a call made by Chairman Mao on May 7 1966 for all cadres to participate in productive labour), which have been set up throughout the country since the Cultural Revolution. The schools, which are in effect training and 'rehabilitation' centres for cadres, run six to twelve month courses, consisting predominantly of the study of political thought and practical labour, particularly agricultural. Cadres are not necessarily Party members, although the majority are.

The relevance of the Chinese system

The applicability of the Chinese administrative system to other developing countries is obviously rather limited because the whole approach to development is entirely different in China. The administrative structure, like all other aspects of economic and social organization, is so closely linked with the political system that it could not be reproduced elsewhere unless equivalent political changes were also made – something which very few other nations are able or willing to do – at least at the present time.

These countries with a one-party system of government are in the best position to introduce some aspects of the Chinese structure since they are able to integrate the political and administrative systems. Tanzania, for example, has combined the position of regional head of the public service with that of secretary of the local Party branch and has introduced regional development committees, which include Party members, civil servants and popular representatives, to overseas development n the regions. More recently the civil service has been reorganized so that administrative and technical staff working in the regions are directly responsible to the

regional development committees, not to their ministerial headquarters.[1] In introducing these changes Tanzania has undoubtedly been influenced to some extent by China, and several other one-party states in Africa are in the process of adopting similar changes.

For other countries it is more difficult to see any relevance in China's approach. However, I believe that there are ways in which an understanding of the Chinese system can assist any developing nation to reconsider and remould its administrative organization. In the remainder of this article I will discuss two aspects of the Chinese model which I consider to be particularly important and relevant. The first is the way in which China has introduced decentralization within a basically centralized structure and the second is the general attitude towards administration, extension and training found in the country.

Decentralization

The advantages and disadvantages of decentralization are a topic of debate in most countries at some time or other. Those in favour of decentralization claim that it is necessary in order to make full use of local talent and resources, to ensure that development programmes are coordinated and relevant to local conditions and to enable people to participate in making and implementing decisions in a supposedly 'democratic' manner. Centralists, on the other hand, argue that central control is needed to maintain national unity and ensure that national policies are implemented throughout the country and to reduce inequalities between regions.

It seems that China has been aware of these conflicting forces for and against decentralization and, largely through trial and error, has attempted to find a reasonable compromise between the two extremes. Before the Cultural Revolution the main emphasis was on strong central control and direction, following the pattern in the Soviet Union. However, it gradually became evident that the administration of a country of almost 800 million people could not be completely controlled from Peking. Decentralization was necessary to facilitate planning and implementation of programmes at the local level and to allow the masses to play an active part in the development process. Without such measures the country would not be able to achieve either its political or its economic goals.

Consequently, after the Cultural Revolution major steps were taken to decentralize political and economic activity. The central government relinquished direct control over all but the most strategic industrial and other enterprises and this was accompanied by an enormous reduction in the number of central government departments and employees and an increase in the volume and flexibility of expenditure

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[1] See Tordoff, W., *Government and Politics in Tanzania* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1967); Dryden, S., *Local Administration in Tanzania* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1968); and (for the more recent changes) Conyers, D., 'Organization for development: the Tanzanian experience', *Journal of Administration Overseas*, vol 13 (1974), pp 438–48.

in the provinces.[1] Although the main decentralization was from the national to the provincial level, there has also been significant decentralization within the provinces. The county has become particularly important as the level for the planning and coordination of agricultural development, especially since the recent acceleration of the campaign 'to learn from Tachai in agriculture.'[2] At the National Conference on Learning from Tachai in Agriculture, held in October 1975, the role of the county in agricultural development was explained and goals set for the achievement of 'Tachai-type counties'. In a summary report on the conference, Hua Kuo-Feng (who has since become the national Premier) announced that:

> there are now more than 300 advanced counties in the country which have distinguished themselves in learning from Tachai . . . (and) an average of 100 more Tachai-type counties should be built annually in the next five years.[3]

The fundamental principle of China's approach to decentralization is that each level in the administrative hierarchy maintains control over only those activities which are necessary to maintain its unity and ensure that basic development policies are followed; all other activities are devolved to subordinate levels. This principle is best explained by looking at the processes of economic planning and financial control.[4]

It is commonly stated that planning in China takes place 'from the bottom up and from the top down'. Let us take the example of agricultural planning. The first stage in the process is for every level, from production teams upwards, to submit to the level above it an estimate of the amount of produce it expects to produce in the forthcoming year and the proportion of this which will be available for sale to the State. These estimates eventually reach the provincial level and then the national level, where they are reconciled with those for other provinces and with estimates of national demand. The revised estimates then become production targets, which are passed down again through the hierarchy, each level setting targets for the level immediately below it. Thus, a province will set targets for all the administrative areas within its boundaries, an area will set targets for all its component counties, a county for all its communes, and so on. Having received its

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[1] Burchett and Alley report that by 1970 the number of departments had been reduced from 90 to 26 and administrative personnel from 60,000 to about 10,000. See Burchett, W. and Alley, R., *China: the Quality of Life* (Penguin Books, 1976), p 199.

[2] Tachai is a small brigade in the Hsiyang County of Shansi Province which has become a model for rural development. Through political organization and mobilization, the people of Tachai have transformed one of the poorest parts of the country into a highly productive area. In 1964 Chairman Mao launched a campaign using the slogan 'In Agriculture learn from Tachai!' and at present an average of about 1.5 million peasants from other parts of the country visit Tachai every year.

[3] Hua Kuo-Feng, *Let the whole Party mobilize for a vast effort to develop agriculture and build Tachai-type counties throughout the country*, summing-up report of the National Conference on Learning from Tachai in Agriculture, October 15, 1975 (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1975), p 27.

[4] For a clear and up-to-date account of planning in China, see Robinson, J., *Economic Management in China*, *op cit*, chapter 3.

production target from the level above, it is up to each administrative unit to decide the best way of achieving this target. Industrial production is planned in the same sort of way, with the lowest levels in the system being the individual factories or other industrial enterprises.

Other development programmes cannot be planned quite so precisely as the setting of agricultural and industrial targets but the basic process is similar. Programmes are usually initiated at a fairly high level, and if possible some form of targets set, but each area is then responsible for implementing them in its own way. For example, in a national campaign to improve educational facilities in 1958, each province set broad targets and guidelines but the main responsibility for detailed planning and implementation fell on the education authorities at county level.[1] A more recent example is the campaign to create 'Tachai-type' counties referred to earlier. The Conference on Learning from Tachai allocated the number of counties to become Tachai-type counties in 1976 between provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions and it was then left to each of these areas to decide which counties should be selected to achieve the target and how those selected should become like Tachai.

The same principle is adopted in financial control. The annual revenue and expenditure of each province, municipality and autonomous region are planned at the national level, using estimated production and consumption statistics as a basis for calculation. In each case the revenue and expenditure figures are calculated independently and it is not necessary for the two to balance, since a surplus from one area is used to finance a deficit in another. It is only at the national level that the budget must balance. The provinces, municiplaities and autonomous regions then allocate their planned revenue and expenditure among their subordinate units in a similar way, and so on down to the smallest administrative units. In this manner the share of total revenue and expenditure allocated to a particular area is determined by the level above, thereby ensuring a fair distribution between regions irrespective of natural wealth or other assets; but the area is then free to decide how to raise or spend this share.

The advantage of this approach to decentralization is that it allows the national government to maintain control over basic issues – such as the production and consumption of essential goods, the implementation of fundamental policies and programmes and the distribution of financial resources – while at the same time enabling people at every level to play a real part in making and implementing decisions. Self-reliance and the use of local initiative is not only encouraged but expected at all levels and in all activities, from the production of basic foodstuffs to the provision of finance for capital investment and the invention of new technical equipment and processes. It is evident even to the casual visitor that, right down to the lowest level of the brigade and factory, the individual peasant or worker is actively involved in

[1] Falkenheim, V. C., 'County administration in Fukien', *China Quarterly*, no 59 (July/September, 1974), pp 518–43.

determining the pattern of his own life and that of the community in which he lives. Joan Robinson concludes that:

> It is clear enough that organized workers and peasants, especially after the Cultural Revolution, have a great deal of power over their own conditions of life – they can be led but not pushed.[1]

It is obviously not possible for other countries to adopt the Chinese approach in its entirety. In the first place, the success of the Chinese system of decentralization is to a great extent due to the country's political organization. The existence of a strong political ideology and its influence over the whole organizational system through the Party structure is the most important means of maintaining national unity and direction. Secondly, few other countries have the same control over the production and consumption of basic goods, since this is only possible in a state controlled economy. Consequently, the system of setting production targets cannot be used as a means of coordinating and controlling interaction between the various levels. Thirdly, it is also necessary to remember the enormous difference in scale between China and most other countries. In terms of population, the average Chinese province is larger than many Third World nations and therefore it is only the process of decentralization below the provincial level in China which is directly relevant to most other parts of the world.

Nevertheless, in spite of these limitations there are some important aspects of the Chinese approach which are applicable elsewhere. Perhaps the most important is the recognition of a series of different levels of decision making and the principle that each level should be responsible for those activities which are fundamental to the maintenance of its unity and basic development strategies but should be prepared to relinquish control over other activities to subordinate levels.

A number of subsidiary principles follow on from this basic one. Firstly, there must be efficient communication channels between the different levels in the hierarchy, either through a national party structure as in China, or through links between the different levels of government and through the public service at each level. Equally important is the need to strengthen the 'horizontal' links between the various sections of the government structure within each area in order to facilitate integrated development. This is done in China through the revolutionary committees, which coordinate the activities of Party, bureaucracy and people at each level.

The central government must also formulate clear national policies and goals which are transmitted down through the system to act as guidelines and to ensure that there is an overall national development strategy. Although it is not possible in other countries to define policies and targets as precisely as in China, it is possible to

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[1]Robinson, J., *Economic Management in China*, *op cit*, p 17. See also Goldwasser, J. and Dowty, S., *Huan-Ying: Workers' China* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), pp 234–36.

determine basic strategies for social and economic development and disseminate them as widely as possible. Finally, the national government should control the distribution of financial resources between the component regions in order to regulate the total volume of expenditure in the country and reduce regional inequalities, although it should give each region as much flexibility as possible in determining how to use its share of the financial cake.

These principles may seem obvious but very few developing – or even developed – countries actually adhere to them. Most governments tend either to maintain tight control over all activities or to decentralize in a haphazard way and relinquish control over the wrong sort of things. The first case results in frustration at the local level, unnecessary delays and communication bottlenecks and the other evils associated with over-centralization; while in the latter case, the central government tends to become weak and ineffective, national policies are either non-existent or disregarded, regional inequalities increase and some regions may attempt to secede.

Recent attempts to decentralize in Papua New Guinea provide a good example of haphazard decentralization. Although at independence in September 1975 Papua New Guinea inherited a relatively centralized political and administrative structure from its colonial power – Australia, there were already moves to decentralize the system through the establishment of elected governments at provincial level. A pilot government was established before independence in the island province of Bougainville, an area where longstanding demands for greater autonomy had recently become more serious because of the development on the island of a large copper mine, providing the major part of the country's export earnings. However, in setting up the Bougainville provincial government and planning others, the national government did not follow the basic principle outlined above. On the one hand, it did not set adequate national policies and guidelines (including policies on the distribution of financial resources between provinces) to provide a framework within which the provincial governments would operate; while on the other hand, it was not prepared to give up its control over relatively minor matters which could have been undertaken more efficiently at provincial level. The result was increasing frustration and unrest in Bougainville, culminating in its attempted secession just before independence, and confusion in most other provinces where plans for provincial government were underway. After this unfortunate start the government is now re-thinking its approach and will hopefully adopt a more viable system.[1]

Administration, extension and research

One of the consequences of the Chinese emphasis on self-reliance at all levels is the emergence of a very different approach to the provision of services such as administration, extension and research. In most developing countries, following the model of the western world, it is expected that these services will be provided by the government – either through central government departments or through

[1]For details see Conyers, D., *The Provincial Government Debate*, Papua New Guinea Institute of Applied Social and Economic Research, Monograph no 2 (Port Moresby, 1976).

some form of local government. In fact, the availability of such services is often one of the indices used to measure the level of 'development' of a particular country or region.

In China, however, the community is expected wherever possible to provide such services for itself. This is done in two ways. Firstly, those people with technical or administrative functions in a community – whether it be a commune, brigade, neighbourhood, factory or other unit – are not government employees posted to the area but members of the community who have been allocated a particular task. The majority, including most administrative and management personnel, technicians and mechanics, primary school teachers and rural health workers (or barefoot doctors), are people who were already working in the community and were chosen for these positions because of their suitability for the job and, in particular, their political and community consciousness. They are generally paid by the community and in rural areas they do not normally receive fixed salaries but, like all other members of the community, are given a share of the community income on the basis of the number of work-points they have earned. Moreover, although they have their special responsibilities, they are also expected to participate in ordinary manual work together with their fellow peasants or workers.

The other way in which the community provides its own services is through the participation of ordinary members of the community. In addition to those with specialized tasks, the ordinary peasants and workers are encouraged to take part in administration and management and the provision of social and technical services. Agricultural and industrial research is an area in which mass participation is particularly encouraged. Every commune and brigade is expected to carry out simple research, including activities such as soil testing and experimenting with new seeds and cultivation practices; while in a factory the ordinary workers are involved in designing new machinery and improving production techniques. Another important activity is environmental research. For example, everyone learns to recognize and report any unusual signs – such as changes in the quality of underground water supplies or the movement of animals – which might portend an earthquake or other natural disaster. The Chinese claim that during an earthquake in Yunnan Province in June 1976 many lives were saved because of advance warning by the people.[1]

This approach to the provision of community services has immediate implications for training programmes. In the western world government officials involved in administration, extension and other services normally attend special courses in national and regional training centres, often for a fairly long period of time before taking up their positions. In China, however, the situation is very different. Wherever possible people learn on the job rather than by attending special training courses. When visiting China one is repeatedly told that 'the people are the best

[1] The Chinese explained their methods at a UNESCO Conference on the Assessment and Mitigation of Earthquake Risk, held in Paris in February, 1976.

teachers'. Therefore, for example, there are no such things as administrative or management training colleges, as found in most other countries; administrators either learn on the job or attain basic administrative skills as part of some form of technical training programme. Similarly, although there are agricultural colleges, most agriculturalists learn by working with more experienced farmers or by trial and error.

Where special training programmes are necessary, they are much more closely integrated with the trainees' work than in other countries. A person normally has to work for at least two years as an ordinary peasant or worker before he or she can apply to attend some form of training programme and then he must obtain the 'support of the masses' and the approval of the community's revolutionary committee. The community will generally sponsor the training and, in most cases, the person will return to work in the community when the training is completed. The training courses are also significantly different from those elsewhere, with a great deal of emphasis on practical work and learning by doing. The Chinese call this 'open-door' training to emphasize that the students should not shut themselves off from the 'real' world while they are being trained.

There are a number of advantages in the Chinese approach to community services. The most important in the eyes of the Chinese is that it discourages the development of an élite, especially among administrators and managers. In addition, it stimulates self-reliance at the local level and encourages a greater work commitment among administrative and extension personnel because they have some form of personal attachment to the community in which they work. It also reduces the rapid turnover of staff which is so common in most developing countries and can be a major impediment to the successful implementation of development programmes.

The Chinese experience makes one begin to question the more conventional western approach adopted in most parts of the Third World. Some governments have been impressed by China's barefoot doctors and have tried to introduce a similar type of rural health service in their own countries, sometimes with direct assistance from China. The village-level workers of India and some rural development movements in other countries (such as the rural reconstruction movement which originated in the Philippines) also reflect a somewhat similar approach in the field of community development. However, programmes such as these have not been widely adopted and they are usually regarded as additional or peripheral to the existing public service structure, rather than as a substitute for it. No country has yet attempted to reorganize the whole of its extension services along these lines, let alone extend the idea to administration and management services. Although it would obviously not be possible to adopt the Chinese system as it stands, it seems that many countries could benefit by considering some aspects of it, especially in relation to the provision of rural extension services and the staffing of local governments.

Conclusion

It is obvious that the details of the Chinese organizational system cannot be repro-

duced elsewhere, especially in those countries which do not have a relatively stable, one-party political structure. However, this does not mean that it is of no relevance whatsoever in other parts of the world. Many of its basic principles, such as the approach to decentralization and to the provision of services, are undoubtedly relevant. What other nations must do is find ways of adapting these principles to meet their own particular conditions and needs.

The Chinese experience is also important indirectly because it demonstrates to other Third World nations that there is an alternative to the conventional western organizational system. Even if these countries do not adopt any aspects of the Chinese model itself, it should encourage them to be more enterprising and look for other systems which will meet their needs. For this reason above all, I think it important that the Chinese experience should not be discussed solely in isolation but should become a focus of attention in studies of comparative administration.

Low Cost Housing: An Appraisal of an Experiment in Nigeria

ADEPOJU ONIBOKUN*

The Western Nigeria Housing Corporation was established in 1958, with the principal functions of building dwelling houses for sale to members of the public, and of issuing loans to those people wishing to build houses on their own land anywhere in the State.[1] Like all other Housing Corporations in Nigeria, the Western State Housing Corporation has, throughout its eighteen years of existence, catered for the housing needs of only the middle and upper income groups.

Research has indicated that a large proportion of the people, and indeed this includes *all* those in low income groups, cannot secure a loan from the Corporation because of one or more of the following reasons: (a) inability to afford the down payment; (b) inability to provide a reliable guarantor; (c) short amortization period; and (d) low monthly income. Similarly, only a very small proportion of the population could afford the high costs at which the Corporation sells the houses it builds and the building plots it develops.[2] At present, the selling price for the three and four bedroom bungalows built by the Corporation ranges between N22,500 and N25,650[3] – an amount which is about twenty times the average income of most lowly paid workers.

It is not the policy of the government and the Corporation that those with low incomes should be excluded from the benefit of public housing and programmes. In fact, the stated government policy is that every Nigerian has a right to adequate, clean, healthy and habitable accommodation. But the ever-increasing cost of land, building materials, mortgage finance, housing maintenance, and the global inflationary trends in all spheres of the economy, make this an objective as difficult to achieve in Nigeria as they do elsewhere in the world.

Certain pertinent questions need to be asked. In the light of the present soaring cost of housing, what steps could be taken, and what experiments could be carried

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*Dr Onibokun is a Senior Research Fellow in Town & Country Planning at the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of Ibadan.

[1]A. G. Onibokun, 'Housing Financing in Nigeria', *Town Planning Review*, vol 42, pp 277–292.

[2]*Ibid.*

[3]1.14 *Naira* = £1 *sterling, approx.* (Ed).

out, to bring down the building costs? Through wise planning use of readily-available local materials in preference to imported materials, and through refinement and adoption of traditional methods of housing construction, would it be possible to provide decent homes at reasonable prices, especially for low income Nigerian families? These were some of the questions which prompted the Military Governor of Western State, Colonel David Jemibewon, to direct the Western Nigeria Housing Corporation in December 1975, to design and build three experimental models of low cost houses. The governor insisted that the houses should be relatively cheap, and that the three types of housing should be designed to cater for different housing needs. The Corporation were required to complete the assignment in one month, and the houses were actually built and opened for inspection in January 1976.

The main objectives of this paper are: to describe the three types of low cost houses; to identify and discuss what strategies and methods were used by the Corporation to bring down building costs; to examine the relative acceptability of the houses to the public; and to suggest ways through which the experiment could be tailored so as to meet the housing needs of the low income people in Nigeria in particular, and in other developing countries in general.

The data on which this paper is based was collected from the following sources: personal observation and professional analyses and evaluation carried out by the author at the site of the housing experiment; intensive discussion with the controller of works and the senior architect of the housing corporation; and content analysis of the written comments made by the visitors to the site. The author also had a unique opportunity of monitoring the construction of the buildings from the beginning to the end, as he was a member of the Board of Directors of the Western Nigeria Housing Corporation, and Chairman of the sub-committee charged with the responsibility for carrying out the assignment.

Characteristics of the housing experiment

Of the three houses, the first was a two bedroom bungalow, designed to meet the needs of a small family of 4–5 persons. The second was a three bedroom bungalow suitable for a family of 5–7 persons, and the third bungalow, containing four bedrooms, was intended for a very large family. The three houses cost N3,700, N4,200 and N4,520, respectively. They were relatively inexpensive. The same types and size of houses if built by a contractor using conventional construction methods, materials and equipment would cost N12,500, N15,600 and N22,100, respectively; or, if the contractor used the same materials as those employed in the experiment itself, the cost would be approximately N6,900, N7,800 and N9,200 respectively.[1]

According to the officials of the Corporation in charge of the building work, the cost of the houses were brought so low because of a series of costs-saving devices

[1]Costs were calculated by a licensed quantity surveyor.

employed. Emphasis was put on the use of local materials; on refinement and adoption of the customary (erroneously called the primitive) method of house building in traditional Nigerian society; on simple as opposed to elegant and expensive design; on economy of space; and on the exclusion of equipment and finesse which are luxuries and not necessities to low income families.[1]

According to the architect of the Corporation, the designs of the houses are simple and the floor areas are moderate-sized. The houses reflect the economic limitations of their types. The materials used for their construction, ranging from mud blocks to the coconut or palmtree timber (*Igi Agbon*) and galvanised corrugated iron sheets, were the cheapest available locally.

Excessive floor area wastage was minimised. Space provided in all three types of house include a comfortable sitting/dining room with a floor area of slightly less than 180 sq ft; bedrooms, each 120 sq ft; and a passage 4–6 ft, wide enough to fulfil certain social and cultural functions. Such necessities as toilet facilities, a shower room, a modern kitchen, as well as an external covered cooking space adjacent to the kitchen, are all provided.

An innovation was introduced into the sanitation system – the use of the aqua privy which could replace the salga and the bucket systems in both urban and rural homes. The aqua privy is a very cheap system and yet very hygienic. It has the advantage of being converted to the modern Water Closet as and when pipe-borne water is available.[2]

Landcrete[3] blocks as opposed to sand-cement blocks were used for the walls of the experimental houses. As a trial some blocks were made using a semi-mechanical mould.[4] The use of landcrete blocks cut down the cost of the two, three and four bedroom bungalows by N3,174, N3,601, and N4,716 respectively.

With respect to roofing, palm tree stem timbers (*Igi-Agbon*) as opposed to hard wood, were used as rafters, while 2 in x 2 in timber were used as purlins. The cost of Igi-Agbon was 60 Kobo* per piece whereas had ordinary timber been used, it would have cost N2.50 per piece of hard wood.[5]

For the roofing cover, galvanised iron sheets were used whereas asbestos sheets are

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[1]The appendix at the end of this article details the materials actually used in the construction of the first (smallest) bungalow.

[2]Winblad, U., *Evaluation of Waste Disposal Systems for Urban Low Income Communities in Africa*, a Research Study, Scan Plan, Copenhagen, 1972.

[3]Landcrete refers to mud mixed with some quantity of cement.

[4]A semi-mechanical mould was used as an experiment for making some of the landcrete blocks. The traditional timber mould was far more efficient and faster than the semi-mechanical mould.

*100 *Kobo* = 1 *Naira* (Ed).

[5]Costs are based on the market value of the materials at the time of construction.

used in the conventional method. The cost of one bundle of iron sheets was N24.00 as against N60.00 for an equivalent bundle of asbestos roofing material.

For the ceiling, timber joists of 2 in x 2 in were used as bearers. For the ceiling boards, hardboards (with the smooth surface turned upwards) instead of asbestos were used. Hardboards are cheaper than asbestos flat sheets, and are easier to handle than the latter.

The doors are all ply-wood flush doors and these are far cheaper than the panel doors regularly used. All window shutters are made of wood (not louvers, glass or other expensive materials) in the traditional ways and fixed into position on site. Door and window openings were spanned with reinforced concrete lintels using ½-in mild steel rods. The floor finish is made of sand-cement-screed laid on 3 in mass concrete base slab.

The use of local-purchase orders and hiring of labour at approved labour rates were avoided as much as possible for the purpose of this experiment, in order to reduce cost. All materials were purchased on a cash basis at the prevailing prices as far as these could be ascertained. For example, gravel purchased at N32 per lorry load would have cost N40, and sand bought at N15 per lorry load would have cost N20.00 if purchased through a contractor and/or a middle man. This procedure of purchasing materials, and the direct employment of labour, contributed immensely to the lowering of the cost of the houses, as the following table shows:

Cost Breakdown of the Experimental Houses

	Materials	*Labour*	*Total*
Two bedroom house	N2,200.27	N1,510.20	N3,710.47
Three bedroom house	N2,578.90	N1,590.00	N4,168.97
Four bedroom house	N2,823.95	N1,704.40	N4,528.35

SOURCE: Western Nigeria Housing Corporation, Works Department, Bodija, Ibadan.

Evaluation and Recommendations

The housing experiments were widely publicized, and the general public were invited to the opening ceremony, and soon over 20,000 citizens had visited the site. The corporation made available at the site a visitors' book, where guests and visitors could write their comments and suggestions for improvements, if any. A systematic analysis of the comments made indicated that the low cost houses were applauded and well received by almost all categories of people who visited the site. In general, the experiment was seen as a break-through, as a step in the right direction, or as a promising hope for the low income families. This statement by a top civil servant is representative: 'The Housing Corporation should be commended for its resourcefulness. These buildings are really wonderful and very attractive. It is hoped that they will meet the needs of the common man'.

The lower income civil servants were equally impressed, and they wished the government could make such housing available to them. As one of them said, 'The structure is fantastic. Will the government provide these types of homes for every

average civil servant?' Market women, businessmen, and other members of the public, all shared the view that the experimental houses would be a welcome and a very desirable substitute to the low quality houses currently occupied by a large proportion of families in urban and rural communities in Nigeria.

Besides praise there was also criticism. This was mainly of two types; the first relates to the finishing of the bungalows and included: poor finishing of the windows and ceilings; lack of cross-ventilation in the living-room; no burglar-proofing on the windows. These complaints are minor, and they could have been avoided if the Corporation had been given more time to complete the project. The three houses were completed in fifteen days, which explains why the finishing of the houses could not be otherwise than imperfect.

The second category of criticisms is more fundamental, and deserves greater scrutiny. Let us discuss the issues one by one, pointing out what steps could be taken to remedy them.

The Housing Corporation had no time to conduct any consumer survey before designing and constructing the experimental houses. It is difficult to claim, therefore, that the houses would meet the requirements of the potential consumers in terms of their culture, cultural demands on living space and living habits. In pursuing further the idea of the low cost housing experiment, the Corporation should not ignore this type of survey. Previous research has shown that the consumers are the main element when it comes to the acceptance or rejection of a housing unit, for the would-be occupiers are the people whose fates are involved; they are the people for whom provision is being made. Therefore, it is not the presumption of the architect, nor the value judgement of the planner, but the view point of the consumers that must guide the design and construction of houses.[1]

Again, the housing experiment, *per se*, could not be regarded yet as salvation for the really low income groups in terms of their housing needs. Compared with past building costs, the prices of the experimental houses are very low; but in relation to the average income of a substantial proportion of the people in Nigeria, the prices

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[1]Onibokun, A. G. (1974) 'Evaluating Consumers Satisfaction with Housing: An Application of a System Approach", *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, vol 40, no 2, pp 189–200.

Phillips, D. R. H. (1967) 'Comfort in Home'. *Royal Society of Health Journal*, vol 87, pp 237–246.

Raven, F. (1967) 'Sociological Evidence on Housing' (2: The Home Environment): *The Architectural Review*, vol 142: 236 ff.

Reimer, S. (1947) 'Sociological Perspective in Home Planning'. *American Sociological Review*, 12: no 2.

United Nations Economic and Social Council (1975a), *General Report from United Nations Commission for Africa: Human Settlements, collaboration with Habitat Secretariat and main issues involved for discussion in Conference*. Economic Commission for Africa, African Regional Conference.

are still too high. Many low income people cannot afford even the low cost homes at the prices indicated. Some of the visitors to the experimental homes expressed this concern. As succinctly put by a messenger, 'the buildings are very good, but can a person like me, a messenger, earning N900 per annum build or buy such?' This means that the Corporation should further explore ways of bringing down the cost of the houses.

As a result of the wide publicity given to the low cost homes, coupled with the fanfare with which they were opened, a large proportion of the people in the State (and indeed in the entire country) are aware of the low-cost housing experiment. Many are expecting further action on the part of the Government and the Corporation. The hopes of the people have been raised. It is incumbent on the Government and the Housing Corporation, in particular, to initiate and pursue actions which will make low cost housing a reality to the people. In this regard the following suggestions are offered:

i the housing experiment should be better refined through research and further experiments. There is a need for an on-going research into the use of local materials in the construction industry (see *UNO*, 1975*b;* 1970). Experience has shown that the more we rely on imported materials the more expensive our houses will be (*UNO*, 1975*b; Federal Ministry of Information*, 1975);

ii at present, in some urban centres, town planning laws do not allow the use of landcrete and/or mud blocks for house construction. The experiments described above have convincingly shown that the town planning laws should be modified to permit the construction of such buildings in both urban and rural areas;

iii the Housing Corporation, Building Societies and Housing Authorities, across the country should promote the types of low cost housing discussed above by (a) making small scale loans available to low income families for such houses; (b) developing and servicing lands (estates) in the major towns across the country and making such developed areas available to families who intend to construct low cost homes; (c) building low cost houses for sale in urban and rural areas; (d) preparing a comprehensive brochure in the step-by-step methods of low cost house building; and (e) making the plans of such model houses available to all communities;

iv there is need for a reappraisal with regard to government policy and programmes towards meeting the housing needs of the citizens of Nigeria. The Federal government should seriously consider the offer of direct loans to low income groups for the construction of their homes. Under the present Federal Housing Scheme a single housing unit costs between N12,000 and N18,000. If the Western State Housing Corporation low cost homes experiment is adopted, the same amount will provide three to four housing units.

In conclusion, the low cost housing experiment discussed in this paper has demonstrated that through wise planning, and careful selection of local materials, decent houses at reasonable prices could be provided for low income families. It has also been shown, however, that there are still quite a number of steps to be taken before the really low income groups will be able to afford the types of decent low cost housing which have been discussed.

TABLE I *Materials Schedule for the Two Bed Room House*

Item	*Description*	*Qty.*	*Unit*	*Rate*	*N*	*K*
1	6″ × 9″ × 18″ Sandcrete blocks	450	Nos	40k	180	00
2	6″ × 6″ × 9″ Landcrete blocks	2,961	,,	3k	88	83
3	Gravel	15	Cu yds	N6.40	96	00
4	Sand	37	Cu yds	N3.00	111	00
5	FRAMES:					
	Door and Window					
	2″ × 4″ × 12′-0″ timber	25	Nos	N2.80	70	00
6	DOORS:					
	a. Flush doors 2′-6″ × 6′-6″	9	,,	N18.00	162	00
	b. Rimlocks	2	,,	N4.50	9	00
	c. Mortise locks	7	,,	N4.50	31	50
	d. 4″ hinges	9	pairs	60k	5	40
	e. Padlocks	9	,,	80k	7	20
	f. Hasp and staples	4	sets	25k	1	00
7	WINDOW SHUTTERS:					
	a. 1″ × 12″ × 12′-0″	16	Nos	N4.50	72	00
	b. 3″ hinges	14	pairs	40k	5	60
8	Window hooks	14	sets	20k	2	80
9	ROOF MEMBERS					
	a. Rafter (Igi-Agbon)	40	Nos	60k	24	00
	b. Purlins 2″ × 2″ × 12′-0″	42	,,	N1.30	54	60
	c. Ridge 2″ × 6″ × 12′-0″	4	,,	N4.00	16	00
	d. Wall plate 3″ × 4″ × 12′-0″	13	,,	N4.00	52	00
	e. Fascia Board 1″ × 12″ × 12′-0″	13	,,	N4.50	58	50
	f. Roofing Sheets	5	bundles	N24.00	120	00
10	Ceiling Bearers					
	2″ × 2″ × 12′-0″ timber	90	Nos	N1.30	117	00
11	Tie rods ½″ × 2″ × 12′-0″	48	,,	38k	18	24
12	Ceiling Boards					
	4′-0″ × 8′-0″ Hardboard	48	,,	N2.90	139	20
13	Painting Works					
	a. Emuslion Paint	10	gals	N9.50	95	00
	b. Gloss	6	,,	N12.00	72	00
14	Cement	5	tons	N60.50	302	50
15	½″ Iron Rod	7	lengths	N3.00	21	00
16	¼″ Iron Rod	7	,,	N1.00	7	00
17	⅜″ Iron Rod	7	,,	N2.00	14	00
18	Binding Wire	1	roll	N2.00	2	00
19	Everite pipes 5″	6	lengths	N10.00	60	00
20	WIRE NAILS					
	a. 4″ Wire Nails	40	lb	50k	20	00
	b. 3″ Wire Nails	40	,,	50k	20	00
	c. 2″ Wire Nails	20	,,	40k	8	00
	d. 1½″ Wire Nails	20	,,	40k	8	00
	e. 1″ Wire Nails	20	,,	40k	8	00
21	Covered cooking space adjacent to kitchen:					
	Concrete works				60	45
	Roofing				36	40
	Framework structure				34	15
					2,210	37

Source: Western Nigeria Housing Corporation, Works Department, Bodija, Ibadan.

Quarterly Notes

BRITAIN – Highlands Seminar

A second Highlands and Islands Development Board/Ministry of Overseas Development joint seminar was held at Duncraig Castle near Plockton in Wester Ross, during the first week of July 1976. Attending the seminar were 25 graduates from 17 developing countries, all of them in receipt of British Technical Assistance awards to Universities, Polytechnics and Institutes in England, Scotland and Wales. They included planners, agriculturalists, engineers, co-operative and community development officers, others from education, petroleum and water resources ministries, and officials concerned with establishments and with demography – just the sort of interdisciplinary 'admix' which it had been hoped to obtain.

The seminar was directed by Professor Sir Robert Grieve whose wisdom and unique knowledge of the Highlands, together with his inimitable skill in stimulating discussion, ensured purposeful proceedings in which everyone participated. Professor Kenneth Alexander, Chairman of the Board, joined the seminar for one day and took the chair while Sir Robert Grieve was away in Edinburgh being conferred with an Hon.D.Litt. Mr Frank Spaven, the Board's Chief Planner who had been mainly responsible for the organisation acted as 'First Lieutenant'.

Besides talks given by staff of the Board about its various activities – covering land development, fisheries and tourism – Councillor Torquil Nicolson spoke on local government, J. S. Grant (Chairman of the Crofters Commission), on the work of his organisation, and Douglas Calder, Director of Planning for the Highland Regional Council, on planning for oil-related developments. Emphasis was placed on seeing the Board's activities on the ground, and field excursions were made to varied enterprises which had received its financial support. These including a printing works and knitwear manufactory on Skye, a village shop whose owner a local Councillor spoke with a notably balanced perspective about the advantages and disadvantages of the nearby oil-platform site, and several businesses at Kyle. In addition a day trip to the shores of Loch Torridon provided a close view of the oil platform being erected at Kishorn, an appreciation of the remoteness of Crofting Villages between Shieldaig and Applecross, a tour of a large highland estate guided

by its agent and including a salmon stream with its fish temptingly awaiting the fishermen's rod, besides superbly rugged highland and seascape scenery.

The general view of participants was that the proceedings had been very much worthwhile, that the seminar provided the opportunity for a brief grass roots study of a development area and how an Agency in a developed country concerned largely with economic development nonetheless gave full regard to the social implications of its projects and kept in close touch with the people concerned. Board members said they found the probing questions from overseas students of very real value, so the Seminar was not entirely without advantage to the sponsors. Many probably left Wester Ross pondering on the question as to how far Crofters reluctance to improve their economic lot by using new methods and techniques was due to a lack of confidence in themselves, and how far was this due to their contentment with a simple way of life and a distaste for Mammon and all his new works.

On the final evening a noted Scots piper played at the Castle and his charming small daughter danced reels and flings. This was followed by an international cabaret which included gaelic songs, African and Pacific Island dancing, a West African charade, and traditional items from Sri Lanka, the Sudan, India and Guyana. (Specially contributed)

THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE – Protection of Leisure

Following on an Age of Leisure Congress organised by the International Union of Local Authorities, in Lausanne, in June 1973, the Council of Europe in Strasbourg has started work on establishing a network of European leisure areas and protected sites whose conservation would be guaranteed by European conventions. The areas most endangered by mass tourism are sea coasts, along river banks and mountain-sides, as well as densely-populated regions. In all such places, the leisure pursuits of increasingly large numbers of people exert great pressure on the ecological balance of parks and open spaces.

The Council of Europe has concluded that efforts should be made in the long-term, to remedy damage already suffered by the environment. In the meantime, regions in the vicinity of major urban centres must be provided with green belts for week-end recreation. Converting old sand and gravel pits into artificial lakes, for instance, is strongly recommended, and access to these regions should be made possible by public transport, with private cars being banned.

The hinterland of coastal strips require development, with facilities directly related to water sports, ie fishing, swimming, motor boating etc being separated into their own distinct areas.

Special protection would be given to high mountain ranges, with maps being prepared showing danger points, and outlining those in which building is prohibited. To combat land speculation, land-owners in those areas would be given an interest in the income deriving from collective recreational facilities.

Source: IULA Newsletter, June 1976

CENTO – Seminar on Local Authority Budgeting

This seminar was held in Ankara from 19–23 August 1974, in the auditorium of the Turkish State Institute for Statistics. It was chaired by the Head of the Turkish Delegation, Dr Rusen Keles-Dean of the College of Political Science, Ankara.

The seminar dealt, *inter alia*, with the relationships between national and local governments, and the rights of budgeting and revenue-sharing. Delegates presented the experiences of their own countries and compared methods and plans with each other.

The delegations recommended that CENTO hold annual meetings in the fields of budgeting and planning and related aspects of social and economic development; that the next annual meeting have as its subject 'Relationships between Budgeting and Planning'. The suggestion made following the 1972 Seminar on Budget Administration was reiterated, that the Government of Iran propose to CENTO that the Tehran Staff College be developed as the nucleus for budget training in the CENTO region.

Source: Seminar Report published by CENTO, Ankara, 1974

Book Reviews

A World Divided: The Less Developed Countries in the International Economy, G. K. HELLEINER (Ed); *Cambridge University Press,* 1976; tables, index; pp 299; £9.00 (hard cover).

This is a very good collection: intellectually stimulating, lucidly written (with the occasional lapse), and with many original observations and suggestions for those concerned with development policy issues. Professor Helleiner – who contributes a masterly introduction – has assembled a group of authors of widely varying backgrounds and attitudes. He has been careful, though, to choose only people of high intellectual quality who, as a result of study, experience, or both might be expected to write with authority on the subjects they have been asked to tackle. This expectation is fulfilled. The book is virtually free of cant or platitude. Concern for the plight and the problems of poor countries is always evident, but so is commitment to rigorous analysis and to understanding the world as it is. Reginald Green takes as one of the texts for his contribution a famous couplet from Yeats' 'The Second Coming'. There is another equally often quoted from the same poem:

'The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.'

'A World Divided' provides evidence to the contrary.

Debates about whether, under existing rules and institutions, poor countries gain from their trade and commercial relations with rich countries will no doubt continue for years to come. Those who believe that, when measured against realistic alternatives, they derive a net gain are still much the more numerous. I would guess that all the contributors to this volume subscribe to such a view, though in some cases with a heavy heart and with a strong sense of the costs to poor countries of participation in the international economic system. At any rate, all are concerned to explore how the poor countries might do better, given the realities of rich country power, and assuming that the latter are sufficiently rational to give at least some weight to long rather than to short-term interests.

But the book has not set out to produce, and the authors do not provide a blueprint for comprehensive and radical reform of the world economic system. There are

many helpful clues, but no map of the route to eldorado. It is none the less refreshing for that; especially given the climate of some recent international discussions in which proposals mutate into doctrinal panaceas, without sufficient examination of their implications for equity, cost, efficiency, or practicality.

It is regrettable – though historians would not find it at all surprising – that the governments of rich countries, with their assumed stake in the status quo, have taken on the critics' role with regard to recent proposals for international reform. The part has been assumed most obviously by the USA, West Germany, and Britain in relation to the proposed integrated programme for primary commodities, and especially in their refusal (at the time of writing) to support the idea of a common fund to finance international buffer stocks. Since there are valid points to make about the problems of such a scheme, it is a pity that the debates should, however understandably, degenerate into *argumentum ad patriam*.

Alfred Maizels puts the case for an integrated programme for commodities clearly and cogently, and does not attempt to conceal what would be needed to operate it: 'continuous assessments of future global needs and future global output, and international arrangements to ensure a smooth flow of supplies at agreed price levels'. An enormous task, succinctly defined. He is equally honest in stating that a comprehensive stabilisation programme 'would involve the extension of the principles of price support already in operation in the domestic markets of the developed countries to the world markets for primary commodities'; a prospect which is likely to cause disquiet among the many and powerful critics of the European Community's Common Agricultural Policy.

Marian Radetzki casts a cold eye over the feasibility and desirability of monopolistic pricing by cartels of primary commodity producers. He questions the durability of OPEC's success in managing supply, and is realistic as well as specific about the possible gains from producer alliances in other commodities. (Paul Streeten, in a typically subtle and perceptive piece, enlarges more generally on the difficulties of holding together a cartel.) And Radetzki is plainspoken in his view that 'when seen from the standpoint of the Third World as a whole, successful commodity market action may appear as a very mixed blessing'.

One of the more depressing aspects of the international economy in recent years has been the feebleness of commercial relations between developing countries. As Frances Stewart shows in her very interesting piece on the direction of international trade, the growth of trade between Western developed (North) countries has been the most dynamic, that between the developing (South) countries the weakest component in overall world trade expansion. The connection she sees between the sluggishness of South–South trade and 'the virtual absence of innovation among South countries, particularly in product development' is original and plausible, though it remains hard to decide how significant it is. Many may feel that the weakness and inconstancy of the political will among developing countries in favour of economic cooperation is still the most important obstacle.

Two excellent chapters are contributed by Constantine Vaitsos and Edith Penrose on relations between poor countries and the transnational enterprises. There are times when one would welcome more guidance from Vaitsos in interpreting his tables and figures. For instance, we are told (p 115) that in 1967 British investment in India accounted for 64.6 per cent of the total stock of European and US investments in that country. It is not the author's fault that these figures are now very out of date. It would, however, be interesting to have data for the annual flows of investment which would, I suspect, show a much lower British share. In addition, though he might object that it was not directly relevant to his argument, it is frustrating to be given no indication of the ratio of foreign to domestic investment (small, in the case of India).

He and Professor Penrose (whose shrewd and pithy article should be required reading in Ministries of Commerce and Industry throughout the developing world) are not wholly at one in their assessment of the necessary ingredients and the extent of developing countries' bargaining power. Penrose argues persuasively that such power is 'often greater than is commonly assumed'. Both agree, however, in stressing the importance of bargaining *skill*. Vaitsos' call for the provision of training and technical assistance in this sphere is apposite, and there is evidence that it would receive at least tacit support among the more reputable transnational companies.

Monetary and financial issues are among the least popular of development topics. Debt is currently an exception to this, and two out of the three contributors in this area deal with it (Göran Ohlin and Nurul Islam). Ohlin's analysis of the various types of debt situation is clear and his observation that what appear to be debt problems may sometimes be symptoms of more fundamental development difficulties is penetrating. Both he and Islam underline an aspect of development which is insufficiently stressed in aid agencies; namely, risk. Islam may not be wholly fair in observing that while creditors are often implicated in decisions or projects which go wrong, 'the creditors require the debtors to bear the full consequences of mistakes'. But there is an uncomfortable degree of truth in this, and Ohlin's plea that it should be 'one of the essential functions of development assistance to assume part of the risk of development' deserves considerable support.

It would be a pity if the greater topicality of these two authors' subject matter caused readers to skip the piece by Carlos Diaz-Alejandro, which is a masterly review of developing countries' problems and opportunities in the post-1971 financial system. Though no longer a current issue, it is useful to be reminded of the case for distributing SDRs, so that they take into account per capita income and population. The distributional consequences of this seem likely to be far more satisfactory (revealing my values here) than those which would flow from price-raising commodity agreements.

In the section on 'Planning for a World in Disorder' Reginald Green provides a salutary dose of realism about the policy constraints and the narrow margins of error within which desperately poor countries, like Tanzania, must try to survive and

progress. John White has telling and enjoyable criticisms to make of UN and other international agencies – and of some of the proposals for their reform. He advocates proliferation of new and smaller multinational institutions for developing countries. Whether or not this is the key to the future remains to be seen. But it is clear, as Helleiner observes at the end of his introduction, that in the decades ahead the developing countries will be seeking and pressing for a good deal more than 'a slight renegotiation in the terms of their poverty and dependence'.

It is not possible in a brief review to do justice to the subtlety, intelligence, and clear-sightedness which inform the contributions to this book. Some of the propositions will provoke questions rather than command immediate and widespread assent. But every article is worth reading, and none should be missed.

ROBERT WOOD

The Shrinking Political Arena: Participation and Ethnicity in African Politics; with a case study of Uganda, G. NELSON KASFIR; *University of California Press, London*, 1976; bibliography and index; pp 323; £16.45.

While the case material on Uganda is substantially as published in Olorunsola*, Kasfir has extended it and placed it in a broad theoretical perspective. That perspective seeks to understand the factors that increase and decrease the degree, from spectatorship to revolution, and kind, institutionalised or not, of participation in the national political process of emergent independent states in Africa.

It is postulated that two major bases of participation in Africa are *class* and *ethnicity*. Kasfir presents a rather unclear analysis of '*ethnicity*', although correctly recognising its situational nature as 'a fluid, not a fixed, condition of African politics – both as a definition of group boundaries and as a cause of intense political demands' (p 53). He argues that '*economic interests*', or '*class*', and ethnicity may be cross-cutting and either reinforcing or contradictory; and also that ethnicity and '*modernisation*' are not necessarily inconsistent values.

Having set out these theoretical themes in part I, Kasfir then dismisses any further consideration of class interests and concentrates in part II on ethnic political participation in Uganda, with a largely descriptive presentation of six case studies which he uses to make his point. The issues considered are the Kabaka Yekka movement, the establishment of Sebei district, the Rwenzururu separatist movement, the 'Lost Counties' controversy, the Mbale dispute, and the largely mythical Bantu and Nilotic 'blocs'.

The major thesis is that ethnic political participation increased during the late colonial and early independence period until a watershed at the 1966 government confrontation with the Kabaka. Then Obote began to effect major ethnic departicipation until Amin reversed the trend following the 1971 coup, when ethnic considerations returned to the forefront of Uganda politics. From a position of strength, the Obote government had been able to reduce 'the public assertion of ethnicity' (p 49). Since the coup, the military regime has encouraged, in public statements,

an apparent participation based on ethnic identity, while in reality it 'has removed or rendered meaningless most participatory structures in the country' (p 265). While hinting at the extra Uganda ethnic support base of the regime and the manipulation of ethnic phobias, Kasfir notes that Amin 'tends to discuss people as if their ethnic identity were the most salient feature of their personality' (p 219) and that the military regime has returned to a colonial model of indirect rule. This process of political decay in Uganda is part of what Kasfir detects in part III as the pervasive spread of departicipation and the thorough elimination of participatory structures throughout post-Independence Africa, with the exception of Tanzania.

Most of Kasfir's explanatory propositions are descriptive and not capable of generalisation beyond Uganda. Yet he fails to appreciate the particular background and effect, unusual in Africa, of two 'trans-ethnic' political parties which totally cross-cut local ethnic affiliations, although to a lesser extent religious affiliations. These parties may have focussed on local issues, not unknown in British politics, but, as with the question of the nature of political linkages, the analysis lacks distinction between *ethnic* and *local* orientations. Much of what Kasfir terms 'ethnic' is no more so than the confrontation of Yorkshire miners or Hull trawlermen with the British government. The book is short on the economic dimension and an analysis of ideology, so failing to identify the diversity of conflicting interest groups in Uganda.

Kasfir does rightly note that the expansion in total resources possible under Obote was related to a reduction of feelings of deprivation. But the 1970 climate for a coup is better related to a failure of Obote's economic strategy than to a failure of ethnic departicipation, which Kasfir suggests is evidenced by the Baganda élite's support for Amin. Given landless and labourer support for Obote in Buganda, one might agree that Obote's deliberate destruction of the symbols of Kabakaship showed poor political judgment. The history of Buganda support for Amin raises the question of whether the future progress of Buganda depends on the rejection by their élite of the Kabakaship, in order not to continue to be manipulated by whoever rules Uganda.

In closing, Kasfir turns to the bureaucracy as 'the most reliable (sic!) organisational instrument available for building the authority of the state' (p 283). Rather assuming that bureaucrats are more responsive to national leaders than to the populace, Kasfir suggests that the bureaucracy may be used as an alternative to the party for building up 'participatory structures'. 'If African leaders are to bring structures and participation into balance, they appear to have little option but to learn how to use their bureaucracies as political instruments' (p 289).

African leaders might learn little from this book, but Western political science theorists may have cause to stop and think.

DENNIS R. PAIN

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*Olorunsola, V.A. (ed) 1972: *The Politics of Cultural Sub-Nationalism in Africa*. Anchor Books, Doubleday, New York.

Action for Children: Towards an Optimum Child Care Package in Africa, OLLE NORDBERG, PETER PHILLIPS & GORAN STERKY (Eds); *Dag Hammerskjold Foundation, Uppsala,* 1975; pp 238; price Skr 40.

This beautifully produced book of 238 pages is a collection of papers by well-known authorities in the field of maternal and child health and is devoted specifically to the African situation. The format is based on ideas and proposals generated by the Dag Hammerskjold Seminar on the Dilemma of Quality, Quantity and cost in African Child Care, which was organised by the Ethio–Swedish Paediatric Clinic and the Dag Hammerskjold Foundation in co-operation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, in Addis Ababa, 14–19 May 1973. The book explores in depth the problems of disease, malnutrition and poverty which are experienced by a high proportion of young children 'in a typical African country', where 'the mortality among these small children may be fifty times higher than in some of the richer countries' (p 39). Then, the kind of options open to developing countries in fields of health and welfare are presented, as a preface to the 'Child Care Package' programme which involves 'medico-social inputs' of a kind which even very poor countries can begin to implement.

The subject as a whole is of immense importance to developing countries, and what is discussed here in relation to Africa, obviously has far reaching implications for other regions. The discussion of use of para medicals within 'decentralised' health care delivery systems which are *not* based exclusively on the Western model; the improvement of general environmental health conditions and the promotion of 'self help' health situations; and the need to bridge the 'vast distance between the planner at the top of the (so-called) pyramid and the health worker in the field' (p 123) – all have direct relevance to the improvement of health and well being among children in developing countries in general. Naturally, the problems and solutions discussed fit most readily into the African context. 'Paediatricians working in the African countries face broadly the same problems in the background and development of the health services, for the epidemiology of the African child is monotonously uniform. Least privileged among the under-privileged receiving only a limited share of limited resources, African children generally face a life of misery' (p 123).

The rather 'glossy' presentation, attractive layout, charts and photographs, indeed help to bring out rather paradoxically even more clearly what is essentially a hard hitting message, that underneath everything certain social as well as health priorities need to be re-ordered if this 'passing generation', rather than 'coming generation', is to be saved. As the Introduction points out 'Children and women have traditionally been low as priority considerations in African Society. Modern enlightenment has not yet made any significant dent in this thinking, and they continue to rank low in the social, economic and political priorities'. This is why the title of the book 'Action for Children' encompasses rather more than might first appear and reaches beyond 'health' planning, in the sectoral sense towards an 'integrated' programme, particularly in the rural areas. 'The development of community concern will be necessary in order to provide the backup support for good sanitation, adequate and

drinkable water, reliable transport and information lines and local education drives, all of which are essential to the viability of the health care programme' (p 128).

Without this concern and action the future will be bleak indeed, as the early chapters reveal. Not only high rates of maternal and infant mortality, which are often accepted by local people as commonplace, but impairment of physical and mental growth at a time when children are most vulnerable, may leave with African populations a dreadful legacy of disadvantage and human wastage. This is something that developing countries cannot in any sense afford, in individual, social or economic terms and that high birth rates will not (as parents imagine) reduce but will rather exacerbate.

The point is made throughout that family size will only be reduced when children are likely to survive, and that family planning must therefore be implemented within a wider health and welfare 'package'. Nevertheless, the advantages of family planning and 'child spacing' are clearly stated as one of the means of improving both maternal and infant health, and it is asserted that the 'wider aspect of family welfare and development is now gaining ground' with the help of the Economic Commission for Africa (p 93). Indeed 'Birth control itself should not be difficult for Africans to accept if the basic cultural factor is explained, for many of the cultural practices inherent in the marriage custom and the practice of breast-feeding included built-in birth control aspects' (p 93).

At the heart therefore of any action to improve the health and welfare circumstances of the child is the need to provide all kinds of services 'that will equip parents and family to discharge their tasks competently' (p 95). The activities of governments in these spheres, which cover not only health but employment, education, women's programmes, sanitation and so on are presented by this book as representing relatively 'modest cost in economic terms' which would 'improve immeasurably the quality of childhood and consequently the productive capacity and thus the general well-being of the grown-up members of the next generation' (p 40). Since, in 1973 in Africa, infants and children up to 6 years of age constituted about 25 per cent of the total population of 374 million the problems posed are those which African governments cannot afford to ignore.

This impressive book deals clearly, concisely and with a great deal of information and authority, with practical matters which are central to the process of development. As T. Peter Omari, Chief of the Social Development Section of the UN Economic Commission for Africa, points out in the Foreword 'Optimum Package should not become one of the new jargon terms that plague us from time to time. It describes a programme that can be applied to actual situations'. It is to be hoped that the book will not be too expensive to be read, not only by those concerned with health planning and practice but by administrators, economists, sociologists, other specialists and informed laymen in the developing and developed world.

JOAN CHAPMAN

Politics of Decolonization: Kenya Europeans and the Land Issue 1960-1965, GARY WASSERMAN; *Cambridge University Press* (*African Studies Series* 17) 1976; pp xi + 225; £9.50.

This book is an important contribution to the study of Africa and of 'decolonization' in general. Gary Wasserman, making extensive use of the personal archives of a number of those involved in the transition to independence in Kenya and of the records of some of the European organisations, looks at the shifting patterns of thought and pressure as both Europeans and Africans tried to adjust to the prospect of independence under an African government. From this he has derived an original and, I think, largely valid approach which has enabled him to discern the underlying trends. Although he concentrates on the European, nevertheless, as he points out: 'The attempt to see racial identification as the crucial analytical category was and is to ignore the pattern of economic and political realignment occurring at the time'. Many European and African interests criss-crossed in an intricate way and to see the events simply in terms of race is liable to lead to confusion.

Basically, he argues that, since "one cannot wholly attribute the 'demise of colonialism' to the rise of nationalism", what happened was a 'consensual decolonization' which was 'a bargaining process . . . oriented to integrating a potentially disruptive nationalist movement into the structures and requisites of the colonial political-economic system'. ('Colonial', here and elsewhere in the book, seems to mean 'of Kenya before independence' rather than to bear any ideological overtones.) He goes on: 'The decolonization process was shaped by an adaptive reaction of colonial political and economic interests to the political ascendance of a nationalist élite and to the threat of disruption by the masses'. The central issue was over land (as it had been in the case of Mau Mau). The book, therefore, concentrates on the bargaining over land and, particularly, on the re-settlement of the 'white highlands'. The theorising is, perhaps, somewhat elaborate for the ordinary reader but in terms familiar to students of the subject. I found it fairly convincing. In plain terms what he describes is (i) an attempt to move into independence without too much disruption of the economy and this was in the interests of most, if not all, the parties involved; and (ii) the attempts by all parties, African as well as European, to adjust to a new political system, to find for themselves the best place they could in it and, indeed, to establish a system. In practice, as Wasserman argues, the nationalistic leaders were made the leaders of the old system and, in this way it was largely maintained. By co-opting them into the system, they were also interested in avoiding mass disruption. The 'bargain', he says, was sealed by the schemes for se-settlement of parts of the white highlands.

This view he has clearly derived from the evidence rather than imposing a pattern on a welter of data. It enables him to thread his way step by step through the five years and the seemingly criss-cross tangle of argument, pressure and negotiation that took place on all sides. Although his main concern is with European reactions, he describes their linkages with various African groups and interests. He divides the Europeans into two broad groups: (i) 'conservatives', who had only limited outside support and tended to base their position on a common front of European

interests (as in Rhodesia, 'European unity in a threatening environment had a powerful attraction'); and (ii) 'liberals', who combined the ranching and plantation interests (both local and overseas) in agriculture with the commercial and industrial interests of the towns, all of which could garner outside financial support (as could, of course, various African groups). Although these groups were by no means homogeneous, the difference in interests was real.

Apart from this he stresses the role of the 'colonial bureaucracy attempting to insure the continued functioning of a political economy under an altered political authority. The thread of the narrative lies in this bureaucracy defeating threats from the Right (European farmers) and the Left (Kenyan peasants), mobilising resources (British and international assistance) and enlisting allies (nationalist leaders, commercial community, African settlers) to stabilise the colonial interests and system of independent Kenya'. This, perhaps, overstresses 'colonial interests' since the concern of the bureacracy was to hand over a going concern; nor did the African leaders wish to take over a broken economy, since this would have made it more difficult for them to maintain themselves in power.

I found his detailed story convincing although I would differ slightly in the emphasis at certain points. It gives much greater coherence to events than they seemed to have at the time. Things always seem clearer with hindsight. There are some very minor errors of detail (such as the supposition that Bruce McKenzie was a member of the New Kenya Group in 1962 – he left it for KANU in mid-1961 after turning down a post in the government formed in April of that year), but none of them affect his argument.

His general theme, of system-maintenance also holds in broad terms. The book has appeared at an apposite time. It will be interesting to compare the Kenya experience with what happens in Rhodesia, and to see whether the Rhodesian civil service (not a bureaucracy) can play anything like the same role as the colonial bureaucracy.

N. S. CAREY JONES

Sékou Touré's Guinea, 'LADIPO ADAMOLEKUN; *Methuen Studies in African History;* appendices and bibliography; pp 191; £5.00.

A general study in English of the Guinean political system is long overdue. Sékou Touré's declaration of independence in 1958; the country's attempts to follow new paths to development; impressive deposits of bauxite, iron ore, diamonds, and an attractive politically aware population seemed to put Guinea in the vanguard of the African Revolution for freedom and modernization. However, externally inspired efforts to undermine Guinea's example to other Francophone countries and neighbouring Guinea-Bissau plus growing internal disenchantment with the ruling party's inability to manage development weakened Sékou Touré's sense of political and personal security. The predictable result has been the emergence of yet another authoritarian regime.

Consequently, despite the interest Guinea evoked, research there is almost impossible. Professor Jean Suret-Canale tried to do a comprehensive analysis in his *La République de Guinée* (Paris: Editions Sociales, 1970), but he limited it to the colonial period and the early years of independence which he knew first hand. Although Dr 'Ladipo Adamolekun, Lecturer at the Institute of Administration, University of Ife, spent some weeks in Guinea in 1968 and four months in 1970–71 and read widely, it is clear he got less essential information, particularly after 1971.

Nonetheless, the author attempts to prove that Guinea is a unique and rather successful case of nation-building in Africa. He claims it broke more completely than others with the colonial past; that it has a clear political doctrine based on scientific socialism; that it has had the benefit of twenty years of uninterrupted single-party rule under a charismatic leader. For proof that these factors have integrated the population in a new nation Adamolekun depends on government publications, Sékou Touré's speeches, descriptions rather than analyses, and a personal favourable view of Sékou Touré and his party.

For example, in a chapter on institutionalization the claim that everyone in the country participates in party decision-making could stand some proof. In a chapter on economic questions the repetition of the now-fashionable view that colonialists and capitalists kept Guinea underdeveloped could stand some analysis. While admitting the failures of the 1964 plan, the author's confidence in the 1971 plan would have benefited from some facts about it. The constant changes in policy are described but not evaluated.

In a chapter on identity Dr Adamolekun maintains the government has made great progress toward nation-building because, in his view, the masses believe whatever the government tells them and because his (1967) data on ethnic distribution of key posts shows that all groups feel well represented. Furthermore, he says the PDG has somehow made women equal to men and has destroyed 'the magical objects' of traditional Guinean religions thus facilitating unification. The only opposition to the ruling 'people's élite' comes from the 'bourgeois élite' inside and outside the country. The majority of Guineans will continue to support the PDG despite some economic disappointments, the author says. This rather small book of 191 pages of text ends with a chapter on nation building theory, appendices which include the constitution and party statues, and a bibliography.

As much as a study on Guinea is needed, this volume, number twelve in Methuen's Studies in African History, does not fill the gap.

BRIAN WEINSTEIN

The New Economics of Growth, A Strategy for India and the Developing World, JOHN MELLOR; *Cornell University Press*, 1976; pp 345; £8.00.

John Mellor and his team (for this is the product of team research as Mellor generously acknowledges) describe, criticise and assess India's economic strategy since Independence and present the outline of an alternative strategy.

The Indian strategy described is that of giving priority to heavy industry. It was based on the economic theories of Feldman (influential in Russian economic planning in the 1930s), developed in India by Mahalanobis on whom much responsibility for the strategy rests. The rationale behind the strategy is that the rate of growth of *all* sectors of the economy ultimately depends on the rate of growth of the capacity to invest. The capacity to invest is identified with the capacity of the national capital goods industry – hence the long run growth of the whole economy is higher the faster the expansion of the local capital goods industry.

In India the strategy involved a large public sector, high capital-intensity of production, large scale productive units, and considerable administrative controls over the rest of the economy, features which Mellor regards (possibly mistakenly) as intrinsic characteristics of the heavy industry strategy. Mellor believes the strategy was a failure: capital goods production grew fairly rapidly, but neglect of agriculture, other wage goods and exports led to near stagnation in these sectors. Income per capita grew very slowly; poverty among much of the population was hardly alleviated; employment grew slowly with the increasing capital-intensity of production. The speed-up in the growth rate – which the theory promises – did not occur.

It might be argued that the heavy industry theory is a long run one; time is needed before expansion in the capital goods sector leads to expansion in the output of machines for the rest of the economy, and subsequent expansion in employment and the production of consumer goods and exports. But in a very poor economy, like India, with a rapid population growth, extra consumption is needed in the short run (otherwise, it may truly be the case that in the long run all are dead); in particular, extra agricultural production is essential to raise rural incomes, prevent starvation and feed industrial workers. The productivity of workers both in the rural and industrial sectors should increase with greater food consumption. The pure heavy industry strategy neglects the interactions between agricultural and industrial growth – interactions which are well set out in this book – and only makes sense in a relatively high income economy, where some of these interactions may be ignored.

Mellor presents an alternative strategy in which agricultural production is given priority; this it is argued leads to a virtuous circle – the development of small-scale industry is encouraged, the rate of growth of employment speeds up, consumer goods production expands, and so do exports. Heavy industry and the central bureaucracy presumably wither away. The possibility of Mellor's strategy rests on the promise of the seed revolution. Thus if Mellor's strategy has plausibility today, it did not when India initiated her strategy of development. To this extent Mellor's strategy did not then represent an alternative and to criticise the Plans as if it did is unfair. Nonetheless, as Lipton and others have pointed out agriculture was wrongly and unnecessarily discriminated against in the past.

Is Mellor's rural strategy a realistic alternative today? In parts of India (and elsewhere) the green revolution has permitted a big expansion in food production and has stimulated industrial development. But in many areas it has been accompanied

by worsening income distribution, reduced employment opportunities, or has simply not taken root at all. So far it has led to the virtuous circle described only in a very limited way. Whether it could be transformed to do so in a major way depends on whether and how the technology changes; and especially on whether social and political changes can be simultaneously pursued, which secure the benefits from the extra production for the poor, and which ensure that the use of the technology will be labour-using not labour-saving, and that subsequent industrialisation occurs in the small-scale sector and not the large. The evidence on India's social and political system – much of which is reflected in past policies and their administration, ably described in this book – suggests that one must be highly pessimistic about procuring the social and political breakthrough – including the essential land reform, and reform of credit institutions – which Mellor's alternative strategy requires.

FRANCES STEWART

Developing Research on African Administration: some methodological issues, ADEBAYO ADEDEJI and GORAN HYDEN; *University of Ife Press, Ife, Nigeria*, 1975; pp 196; cased $12.95, paper $8.00.

This is a collection of essays which promises much more than it performs. The editorial introduction is full of good intentions: 'to explain, particularly to non-academic consumers of research findings, the complexity of the research process . . . to offer guidance for scholars who plan research on any aspect of public administration in Africa', and to achieve 'greater methodological awareness' defined in terms of 'both the specific techniques of inquiry and the general philosophical principles underlying any research'. None of these intentions is adequately realised. It is doubtful that scholars in the field would find much that they do not already know; or that non-academic readers, presumably African political or bureaucratic leaders, will reverently place the volume within handy reach (the assumption that they would pick it up in the first place is astonishingly naive, and at no point is there any exploration of the means by which academic wisdom might be conveyed to those – the practitioners, naturally – regarded as most in need of it).

The promise to investigate a range of specific research approaches and problems is more squarely confronted, with papers on research design, case-studies, participant observation, action research (here labelled 'experimental'), quantitative issues and data generation. There can be no doubt of the significance of the double-edged theme that emerges: first, that research into administrative systems in Africa is badly needed; secondly, that it is a research field full of pitfalls for the unwary, and none so hospitable for the wary. The difficulties of the research field are, of course, the principal explanation of the lack of good research, and familiar problems are rehearsed: poor access, political sensitivity, sketchy data, the ingenuousness of expatriate researchers, and, not least, considerable methodological uncertainty.

This volume does nothing to resolve, explain or even explore the implications of methodological uncertainty. This crucial failure to deal with a central research issue

stems partly from the absence of any attempt to discuss the *relative* merits of the methodologies on display, but mainly from an apparent unwillingness to relate 'specific techniques' to 'general philosophical principles'. Yet the choice of research method is frequently conditioned by the researcher's overall conceptualisation: the researcher cannot know how to do his research until he has cleared his mind about what he hopes might emerge, and what he then intends to do with what emerges. In administrative research, it is precisely at this initial stage that confusion prevails, a confusion which flows from the conceptual uncertainties which surround the notion of 'public administration'. It is now well established that this notion is essentially imprecise; that a diverse range of disciplinary approaches – law, political science, sociology, social anthropology, psychology etc – may appropriately be employed in the administrative field; and that the focus is constantly shifting (in a rather fashion-conscious way): now structures, now functions, now behaviour, now group relationships, now policy studies, and so on. The researcher is, in theory, faced with an embarrassment of approaches, and the primary task might seem to be the disentanglement from the general mess of what fits a particular situation (indeed, Bernard Schaffer argues in favour of 'situational' research of this type). Unhappily, but understandably, it is rare to find researchers intellectually equipped to evaluate the whole range of disciplinary possibilities, or even prepared to peer through the bars of their own disciplinary cages. This means that the research we *do* have into the public administration (in Africa and in other developing areas) is fragmented and incoherent in a sense which reflects accurately the fragmentation and incoherence of the intellectual framework of this area of studies. These conceptual issues are of primary significance both for research design (at least where the design consciously keeps in view the essential purposes of research), and for any attempt to use research findings to refine or reconstruct theoretical formulations. But these concerns seem to be peripheral for the editors and for most of the contributors (Schaffer, Murray, Leonard and Prewitt are notable exceptions): in that the contributors are given fairly specific briefs, responsibility lies with the editorial conception of what issues are central to a discussion of research in African administration and the failure to impose on contributors any sort of unifying theme.

One result is a strong sense that the contributors are talking to themselves rather than to each other. But some of these monologues are sufficiently stimulating to be worth overhearing. Goran Hyden, in extolling the virtues of participant observation, neatly underlines the case for this method by expounding the defects of alternative methods, and wants research to reflect 'the human reality' of administrative systems. David Leonard and Kenneth Prewitt, in much the most rigorous piece, suggest that if research is to be accurate, it must have a quantitative dimension; if it is to be useful to practitioners it must be presented as 'productive' ie as having a demonstrable impact upon the improved creation and distribution of public benefits; and if it is to come to grips with the 'cultural uniqueness of an administrative system' it can most fruitfully attempt the identification, description and classification of groups, 'very often the important units of action in any administrative system'. David Murray's sensible analysis of the case study method of research is a welcome antidote to a superficial discussion by B. L. Jacobs, who seems unclear about the distinction (carefully made by Murray) between research case

studies and case studies intended to meet training objectives. Schaffer, dealing with the problem of comparisons, is frequently over-confident in tone; but he has a telling passage about the weary jargon used by those who conventionally write about administration. This plea for a 'new minting' of the language of public administration will find a sympathetic response in those who believe that terms like 'co-ordination', 'decentralization', 'management', 'leadership', 'communication', have been so abused as to become devoid of content, and so meaningless.

In the final analysis, though, the impact of individual contributions is weakened by the absence of a clear intellectual framework, and by the failure to explore the implications of the existence of alternative research methodologies. The conceptualisation of the research field presents a formidable problem but it is one with which would-be researchers into public administration (in Africa or anywhere else) must grapple. Perhaps it would come as no surprise if they threw up their hands in despair and fell back on the comic (though apparently straightfaced) complaint by Hyden that people 'do not know how to be studied'. On the evidence of this book, people might reasonably conclude that researchers still do not know how to study them.

MARTIN MINOGUE

Agricultural Administration in Andhra Pradesh, A Study in the Process of Implementation of Agricultural Development Programmes, K. SESHADRI; *Bombay, popular Prakashan*, 1974; pp 302; Rs 45/–.

This is a useful book for two main reasons. First, it deals with problems of agricultural development that have eluded economists and political scientists for so long, and secondly its documentation exceeds in detail the material to be found in Hanson, Lipton or Hunter.

The book is rich in material on the problems and processes of rural development, and the reviewer can hardly do justice to it all in a brief summary. 'Agricultural Development', says Dr Seshadri, 'takes place in and is influenced by the socio-political milieu . . .' and he suggests that for purposes of rational decision-making a reduction in the influence of the generalist administrators is necessary. The study follows a combination of descriptive and survey research – chiefly mailed questionnaire – methods. In the main meat of the study, the author provides a detailed discussion of the administrative structure, work load patterns, inter-relationships among the various departments, internal job mobility and job satisfaction. Considerable space and attention are devoted to the planning process. The subject is approached from various angles. The wide disparity between physical targets and performance, communication bottlenecks, shortage of inputs and frequent transfers of officials are some of the important problems highlighted in this chapter.

The chapter on co-ordination is perhaps the best of all: it contains a sensible and broad overview of the subject, and here Dr Seshadri takes the opportunity to criticise the rudimentary understanding of Indian bureaucrats; the latter, he thinks,

seem to believe that co-ordination has to be achieved by bringing together activities, agencies, or personnel with unity of command.

Written in a forceful and effective style, the book offers a comprehensive view of Agricultural Administration in Andhra Pradesh. However, Dr Seshadri's excursions into behavioural research display an air of reluctance. He makes no secret of this. Reliance on data from mailed questionnaires under Indian conditions is somewhat debatable. Dr Seshadri shares the impatience of technocrats and development economists in taking an 'anti-politics' stance. In his description of the political drama of Panchayati Raj the politician comes out as the incontrovertible villain; he is a Hobbesian species, crazy after power and selfish. The bureaucrat, on the other hand, receives more charitable treatment; he is let off with a few kicks for his inefficiency and corruption. While the politician is accused of being motivated by class interests and the desire for personal gain the bureaucrat is generally viewed as a 'neutral' species. Therefore, the author is categorical about the need to discard Panchayati Raj and resharpen some of our old saws. In a country of the size and diversity of India a bureaucrat-run operation has its own hazards. Further, in a political vacuum the bureaucrats are likely to take up political roles. Such matters as these provide the basis of much future debate.

C. V. RAGHAVULU

Book Notes

Organising the Farmers, Cocoa, Politics and National Development in Ghana

BJORN BECKHAM *Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, Uppsala.*

Appendices, bibliography and glossary; pp 299.

When Dr Nkrumah took the helm of the newly independent State of Ghana, the country's satisfactory financial reserves and viability depended primarily on one crop, cocoa. Few politicians could afford to ignore cocoa, many politicians cultivated cocoa themselves. Yet it was on cocoa as Bjorn Beckham's study shows that Nkrumah's Convention People's Party foundered. While cocoa prices were well maintained it was possible to appropriate the surplus accruing from the crop for wider developmental purposes; as prices fell the impact of State action intensified and 'farmers were squeezed between falling prices and rising current costs'. A forward looking government was not prepared to trim public expenditure to accord with the decline in the real resources at its disposal. While the government planned for future expansion, the national economy grew more and more fragile. The author provides a detailed examination of the Farmers Council with its commercial – and (linked, indeed integrated as it was with the CPP) its political monopoly. If independence had preceded the post war cocoa boom development, sights would have been lower and resources might well have met politico-economic objectives; as it was post-independence Ghana was faced with a cocoa slump which her political leaders took all too little into account.

This is a book of considerable interest, not only in the context of Ghana's history during the Nkrumah regime but also in the lesson that it provides for politicians and planners on the dangers of a one crop economy and of seeking ambitious diversification while still dependent on one crop at a time of falling world prices.

Planning Techniques for a Better Future

GRAHAM PYATT and ERIK THORBECKE *International Labour Office, Geneva.*

With appendix; pp 91; 17.50 Francs (Swiss).

This small volume contains the main result, of a major ILO research project on planning for growth, redistribution and employment. One main recommendation is that national data systems should be reorganised so that planning can be concerned with poverty and inequality as well as growth.

The researchers provide a conceptual framework which is not designed with radical changes in mind, but which allows for variable political decision-taking on such matters as the reallocation of assets, be they land or other wealth. The framework does however give explicit recognition to poverty and in essence this valuable research, planned in advance and carried out in advance of the World Employment Conference, comes very much to the same conclusion as the working document which the Conference endorsed – the Basic Needs Approach to employment creation and economic growth.

Agricultural Policy and Economic Growth in Nigeria 1962-68

JEROME C. WELLS *Oxford University Press,* 1976.

Tables, bibliography and index; pp 490; £12.75.

Nigerian contributors to this Journal have complained that in the post-independence development of their country, insufficient resources have been deployed into develop-

ing agriculture on which the majority of the people depend for their living and on which the State, notwithstanding the riches oil has brought, must depend in the long term for a stable and viable economy.

In this volume Jerome Wells examines Nigerian agricultural policies during the period of the 1962–68 economic development plan period. The examination is a close one in which the facts are allowed to speak for themselves: Nigerian agriculture and growth; the typology of government policies and investments, and the basic form of investment criterion; budgetary allocations and expenditure; selected investment projects and related policies. Finally the assumptions and evaluation of the plan period are summarised.

The author concludes that if the results of the plan period were less than expected they achieved a great deal by way of agricultural expansion. The prospects he believes are set fair but much will depend on 'the quality of planning and its ability to adapt to the unforeseen events of the future'.

Politics in the Organization of African Unity
MICHAEL WOLFERS; *Methuen, London.*
Map, bibliography, index; pp 229; £2.50 (paperback).

Michael Wolfers' research study of the Organization of African Unity has the advantage of his seven years of contacts as *The Times* of London's OAU reporter.

It is doubtful if anyone else could have written so knowledgeably over the whole range of OAU activities – the Charter and how it came about, the General Secretariat, the Specialised Commissions, Emergency Sessions and the Liberation Committee.

Here is a small and inexpensive volume which will help many observers and students of African affairs to understand how a very complex organization ticks, and something of the 'Workings' behind the scenes which the publicly-presented attitudes sometimes conceal. Despite strains and stresses, OAU is an important force for peace between independent African States – and that alone is worth a lot in a world of strife. Michael Wolfers tells clearly how the system operates.

Non-Profit Housing Associations – Organisation, Financing and Structural Integration
United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.
Document ESA/OTC/SEM/75/2; pp 195.

This UN publication reports an inter-regional seminar held in Denmark in 1973 and attended by representatives from 24 countries – 5 in Latin America and in South East Asia, 4 in the Middle East and in East Africa, 3 in West Africa, 2 in the Far East and 1 in the Caribbean.

Among the conclusions and recommendations reached were:

1 The need for stable and precise government policies and dependence on government where capital for non-profit purposes is scarce, for the provision of land and services;
2 Not 3 per cent as presently common, but 5 per cent needs to be devoted to housing;
3 '*The role of non-profit housing associations is not simply to provide money, but to provide shelter and security for the poor*' . . .;
4 Well organized Associations allow for valuable government/citizen co-operation/participation;
5 Wide-spread educational programmes were needed covering co-operative principles, and training in managerial functions were needed if full popular participation in non-profit housing associations was to be achieved;
6 Pilot and/or demonstration projects were needed.

The Statesman's Year Book 1976-77
JOHN PAXTON (Ed) *Macmillan, London.*
Pp 1556; £7.95.

The 113th edition of this invaluable reference book has been produced to the usual high standards of printing and cartography, with information of every country and important international body clearly and concisely provided. Particulars about Zanzibar (eg under Justice) have still to be brought up to date. New maps illustrate disaster zones and the regional development areas of EEC.

The Irish Civil Service
SEAN DOONEY *Institute of Public Administration, Dublin,* 1976.
Appendices, bibliography, index; pp 201; £3.50.

Eire's Civil Service has been in existence no longer than the State – some 55 years in which it has grown in numbers, first slowly and since World War II very rapidly, from 26,000 to 47,000. However, it is worth noting that 22,000 of the civil servants, or 47 per cent, are postal workers serving an Institution which elsewhere is often not a Government Department.

Of particular interest is the Report of the Devlin Committee*. The central

feature of the report and accepted by the government was for the establishment of specialised staff units, within departments, for planning, finance, organisation and personnel – separate from the executive functions of the departments. Co-ordinating and managerial units have since been set up in the Department of Health and will follow in other ministries. The units in effect are intended as 'think tanks' to plan and advise line management. How successful this reform may prove will be of great interest to Civil Service departments and those concerned with public administration far beyond the shores of Ireland. Also as a result of the Devlin Report, a Committee of the Irish Dáil has been set up to consider the best means of ensuring administrative justice over complaints by the public of maladministration etc, and the possibility of appointing an Irish Ombudsman.

Finally the author points out that the Devlin Committee reported very favourably on the conduct of the Irish public service.

*Report of Public Services Organisation Review Group 1966-69

Urban Problems in a Metropolitan Setting

Dr THOMAS WELLS (Ed) *Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia*, 1975.
Table; pp 99.

This slim volume contains five papers, four from the Political Science and one from the Economics Faculties at Old Dominion University. All are concerned with the urban environment in the United States and include political communication and the role of local councillors. The crisis created by commerce abandoning city centres and the consequent loss of municipal revenue and a reduced quality of public services, are noted – a matter of concern not only in America.

Ranging over such aspects of urban living as Urban Bureaucracy, the performance of Ombudsmanic institutions in handling complaints against public administrations, and both private and official reactions to the way metropolitan government functions, the monograph does not claim to provide easy solutions; rather, it hopes only to enlarge the reader's understanding of urban America. It favours regional solutions and regional approaches to problems.

Strategy for Development

JOHN BARRATT, DAVID S. COLLIER, KURT GLASER, HERMAN MONNIG (Eds) *Macmillan, London*, 1976.
Index; pp 324; £10.00.

This volume contains 20 papers presented at a Conference held in Johannesburg at the end of 1974 – 8 by American based contributors (one a Nigerian), 7 by South Africans, one apiece by an academic at Roma and from Malawi, a Minister from Taiwan and from one of South Africa's Bantustans, and a CDC irrigation official in Swaziland. The material is of variable quality and contains little or no new thinking. How the CDC functions, is clearly and concisely set out by A. R. Kendrick; Donald Stone stresses with his usual skill the need for administrative capability; Zimani Kadzamira explains simply and briefly how the development process works in Malawi. These apart, there is not really much to get for one's £10.

Race and Suicide in South Africa

FATIMA MEER *Routledge and Kegan Paul.*
Tables and index; pp 319; £5.95.

This is a revealing study of suicide among South Africa's different ethnic groups. The author's research indicates a relation between high suicide rates and poverty, and of the racial groups in Durban it is the Indians who have the highest rate, with incidence concentrated in the slums and among the poor generally. Her conclusion that 'the powerless, the discarded, those without hope, these are the people who live in the shadow of suicide', must have wide if not universal application.

Task Groups and Linkages in Complex Organisations: A Case Study of NASA

HENRY J. ANNA *Sage Publications, London.*
pp 64; £1.75.

The author's examination of NASA leads him to the conclusion that the matrix approach is well suited for explaining a highly complex organisation albeit it lacks 'the aesthetic quality of simplicity', but its explanatory power will he believes make it useful and may eventually make possible the formulation of a superior theoretical approach in this field.

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